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THE SOCIAL IDEAS OF
RELIGIOUS LEADERS
1660—1688

By
RICHARD B. SCHLATTER



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PREFACE

IN the reign of Charles II clergymen were intellectual leaders. No other thinker had such a wide audience as did the preacher in his pulpit, and his printed sermons and treatises were the staple reading matter of his parishioners. Perhaps no religious leader of the period seems so important to us as Hobbes or Locke, but in the opinion of contemporaries the refutations of the *Leviathan* were as sound or sounder than the work itself, and it was plain that Locke had built upon ideas of natural law which divines had thought out before him. We are certainly justified in assuming that clerical social theory is an important chapter in the history of ideas about society which were current from 1660 to 1688.

What clergymen thought is, of course, interesting in itself. Richard Baxter's *Christian Directory* is the last medieval *summa* published in England, while Richard Cumberland and John Wilkins are among the earliest writers on the wonders of natural law. Old-fashioned persons like Baxter deduced from the Decalogue that theft and adultery were sins; up-to-date authors proved that adulterers and thieves were naturally unhappy and poor.

I have tried, however, to do more than describe the interesting thoughts of the divines. Instead of assuming that their social ideas were independent, developing by an internal dialectic of their own, I have tried to show how they were integrally connected at every point with social facts. This is, in general, the genetic method used by Professor Tawney, to whom I am more indebted than I was able to acknowledge in the footnotes. Professor Tawney, however, is often concerned to find at what point social theory went wrong, at what point it ceased to take account of the facts—his history is frequently a criticism of modern society, an attempt to put our theorists on the right track by showing how men in the past ceased to be realistic and deviated from the truth.¹ I have tried to focus on the period

¹ For a criticism of this tendency in Tawney's writings, see Walton Hamilton, 'Property—According to Locke', *Yale Law Review*, vol. 41.

in question, without glancing into the future; I have been less concerned with judging by absolute standards, more concerned with understanding the relative criteria of the day. As a consequence, perhaps of this rather different orientation, I have discovered less to condemn in the social theory of the clergymen of the Restoration. Although they may be inadequate for us, the ideas about society which revolved in the heads of the divines of the period were not infrequently reasonable deductions from facts, and were often useful justifications of progressive tendencies.

I have avoided being drawn into the debate about the causal connexion between capitalism and protestantism.¹ For the time being it is more a rattling of dry bones than a discussion—a recent Italian spokesman attributes both capitalism and protestantism to the triumph of ‘brachycephalic’ over ‘dolichocephalic’ rulers.² I have confined myself to the easier task of describing some of the connexions between religious thought and economic fact in Restoration England.

In his excellent article on the economic ethic of the Dutch Calvinists, Ernst Beins remarks that he found difficulty in generalizing because of the paucity of material.³ I have encountered the same difficulty. Although the clergy were still the intellectual leaders of England, they said less than we could wish about social problems. Perhaps the spirit of controversy had to some extent exhausted itself in the preceding decades: many persons whose names appear in the following pages had taken full part in the hot debates of the Interregnum. Certainly the government of Charles II did not welcome clerical opinion on matters which it regarded as its own affair. Moreover, we must remember that the clergymen who did publish their ideas in books were, for the most part, men of learning and superior social position. What their humbler brethren would have said, had they had

¹ Gordon-Walker, P. C., ‘Capitalism and the Reformation’, *Economic History Review*, November 1937, is an interesting criticism of the problem as stated by Weber and his opponents.

² Fanfani, Amintore, *Catholicism, Protestantism, and Capitalism*, 1935, and the review by J. Rees, *Economic History Review*, February, 1936.

³ ‘Die Wirtschaftsethik der Calvinistischen Kirche der Niederlande 1565–1650’, in *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, N.S., afl. 2, 1931, p. 88.

the opportunity to speak their thoughts freely, we can only guess.

Because we have so few records after 1660 relating to Baptists, and because the history of the Quakers has already been carefully studied, I have discussed these two rather special sects only by way of appendices.

To thank those who have helped in the making of this book is both a duty and a very great pleasure. Professor G. N. Clark suggested the subject and shared with me his knowledge of the seventeenth century. I also wish to thank Professors Perry Miller, F. O. Matthiessen, and Claude Jenkins. Mr. C. L. Barber did what could be done to make my words accord with my thoughts.

R. B. S.

HARVARD COLLEGE, 1939

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A NOTE ON DATES

IN many cases I have not been able to establish the dates of the works which I have consulted. Consequently, it is likely that I have quoted sermons and other writings which were not written in the period. But I have tried to guard against emphasizing undated works as if they were typical of the time.

The dates in parentheses in the footnotes are those of the best editions published in the latter half of the seventeenth century, or, the dates of writing or preaching. Wherever possible I have compared these editions with more available ones regularly cited.

PART I THE FAMILY

I HUSBAND AND WIFE

A FAMILY, wrote Richard Baxter, consists of a '*pater familias, mater familias, filius and servus*', but the essentials exist so long as there is a ruler and a ruled.¹ Such was the traditional definition to which all of Baxter's contemporaries adhered,² and the typical discussion of the family was divided into the relations of husband and wife, parents and children, master and servants. The father was the leading member of the family, with wife, child, and servant ranged below him in that order; or, as William Bell, the minister of St. Sepulchre's, said to his parishioners, the father is the head, the wife the rib, the children the loins and bowels, and servants the feet.³

The function of the husband was said to be that of father, priest, and king, corresponding to his natural, religious, and political position within the family.⁴ In fact, the family was regarded as a miniature Church and State, at the same time the basis, and the model, of the larger Church and State. The duty of obeying father and mother was often taken by religious writers to symbolize all duties owed to superiors by inferiors, within and without the family.⁵ According to the nonconformist minister, Thomas Watson, every man has five fathers: political, ancient (elderly men in general), spiritual, oeconomical (masters), and natural.⁶

¹ *A Christian Directory: or, a Summ of Practical Theologie and Cases of Conscience*, pt. ii, p. 194 (1673).

² Powell, C. L., *English Domestic Relations, 1487-1563*, New York, 1917, Appendix D

³ *Joshua's Resolution to serve God with his family recommended to the practise of the inhabitants of St. Sepulchre's Parish* (1672).

⁴ Goodman, John, *The Old Religion Demonstrated in its Principles, and described in the Life and Practice thereof* (1684).

⁵ e.g. Ford, Simon, *A Plain and Profitable Exposition of, and Enlargement upon, the Church-Catechism, Fifth Commandment* (1684); and, Alleine, Joseph, *A Most Familiar Explanation of the Assemblies Shorter Catechism, Fifth Commandment* (1674).

⁶ Watson, Thomas (d. 1686), *A Body of Practical Divinity consisting of one*

As a model in miniature of other social groups, and as a primary institution itself, the family was regarded as the most fundamental of all societies. Anglican and nonconformist agreed on this point, whatever the varying degrees of emphasis, and the ideas of Baxter are typical. Dividing the *Christian Directory* into four parts, he wrote first of the private duties of individuals, secondly of family duties, and thirdly and fourthly of ecclesiastical and political duties. The family was dealt with secondly not only because it was the smallest group, but also because it was the connecting link between the individual and the Church and State. A man was not thought of as an individual who was a Christian and an Englishman: he was an individual who belonged to a Christian, English family. Church and state, Baxter said, are built upon the foundation of the family. 'A holy well-governed family is the preparative to a holy and well-governed church', and 'Well-governed families tend to make a happy state and commonwealth.'¹ The major cause of confusions in religion and government is improperly regulated families. The very existence, said Thomas Manton, of towns and nations is dependent upon the proper functioning of the family.² Covered with dust, eaten with worms, rows upon rows of family books in the old libraries of England are a silent witness to the importance, in the eyes of the church, of that institution. Its origin in the laws of God and of nature, the duties and rights which linked its members together, and which linked it to the still larger political and religious societies, gave the family a primary position in the community.

The origin of the family, and the authority by which it had a claim to exist, were, of course, to be found in the Bible. God created it and declared its righteousness in his

hundred seventy six sermons on the lesser catechism composed by the Reverend Assembly of Divines at Westminster, p. 349 (1692).

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 512-14.

² Manton, Thomas (d. 1677), *A Sermon on Psalm cxxvii. 3*, in *A Fourth Volume containing one hundred and fifty sermons on several texts of Scripture*, pp. 839-40 (1693); Comber, Thomas, *A Companion to the Temple*, 1841, pt. iv, Introduction (1672-6); Lee, Samuel, *Sermon VIII in The Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields, and in Southwark: being divers sermons preached A.D. 1659-1689 by several ministers of the Gospel in or near London*, 5th ed., 1844-5, i. 146-7.

laws.¹ In the Word were the examples of holy men, the counsels of prophets and of saints. Plainest of all was the Fifth Commandment, and the usual sermon or treatise of the Restoration included under that head, as logically deriving from it, all the rules regulating the members of the household.² Moses, in the opinion of Richard Cumberland, had recognized no other earthly authority than that of the father, an authority which had been inherited from Adam.³ As an arch to support his church, God had built the family. The keystone of that arch, paternal authority, derived from divine commission, so that 'as the several Justices in the countries do govern as officers of the king, so every magistrate and master of a family, doth govern as an officer of God'.⁴

Not only was the family commanded in Divine Revelation: God had also established it firmly in the law of nature and reason. In the Restoration period men had travelled a long way on the road toward natural religion, and many divines were trying to prove that the rules of morality could, for the most part, be plainly discerned without the help of revelation.

One of the most important attempts to examine the law of nature in its moral and social implications was Richard Cumberland's *Treatise of the Laws of Nature*, first published in a Latin edition in 1672. Cumberland, who later became Bishop of Peterborough, said his purpose was to show that 'the nature of things, which subsists, and is continually govern'd by its first Cause, does necessarily imprint on our minds some practical propositions . . . concerning the study of promoting the joint felicity of all rationals. . . .'⁵ The general law of nature, from which all other may be deduced, and to which all rational men must necessarily give assent, is stated in the proposition, 'The endeavour, to the utmost of our power, of promoting the common good of the whole

¹ Doolittle, Thomas, *Sermon XV, Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields, and in Southwark*, ii. 212-13; Goodman, John, *The Old Religion Demonstrated in Its Principles*, pp. 237-8 (1684).

² See above, p. 1, notes (4) and (5); Sherlock, Richard, *Mercurius Christianus: The Practical Christian*, i, Fifth Commandment (1673).

³ *A Treatise of the Laws of Nature*, 1727, p. 33 (1672).

⁴ Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 512. Biblical citations giving proof of the father's powers are listed on p. 547.

⁵ *Treatise of the Laws of Nature*, Introd., p. 14.

system of rational agents, conduces, as far as in us lies, to the good of every part, in which our own happiness, as that of a part, is contain'd.¹ The particular laws of nature follow as corollaries of the general law, just as in mathematics—they are accepted as true by every 'rational', and are eternal and unchanging. For example, says Cumberland, it is as obvious that a consenting to a division of property and human labour, and the preserving of that division once it is made, is for the good of all men, as that quadrants or sectors are parts of a circle.² His sixth chapter was designed to show that all the moral principles governing individuals, families, churches, and nations, could be discovered in this manner by reason.

Though Cumberland did not attempt to demonstrate in any detail the foundation of the family in the laws of nature, he made some casual references. As the first State and Church, the pattern of all others, the family was established to introduce order into human society: the inconveniencies of having wives and children in common were even then obvious to every one.³ The man, stronger in mind and body, took his place in the family as the natural ruler, and from paternal government was derived the authority of civil government.⁴

So far, in Cumberland's opinion, the needs of society had served to show that the family was a necessary institution. From the individual's point of view, the argument from nature is, according to Cumberland, equally valid. For a particular man, the desire to perpetuate his name, and the need for support in old age, lead naturally to propagation, the education of his children, and the provision for their livelihood.⁵

Moreover, monogamy, since it makes it possible to found 'new families, to preserve old ones, and to extend friendship

¹ *Treatise of The Laws of Nature*, Introd., p. 16.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 34-5.

³ pp. 63, 350.

⁴ p. 350. A note by the translator, John Maxwell, points out that Mr. Locke has disproved this point of Cumberland's. Against the background of the literature on the family, Filmer's *Patriarcha* becomes more significant.

⁵ pp. 69, 338. Barrow, Isaac, *An Exposition of the Decalogue, Theological Works*, 1859, vol. vii, Fifth Commandment; and Parker, Samuel, *A Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Law of Nature and the Christian Religion*, p. 51 (1681), agree that the desire for a family is based on 'natural instinct'.

rising from affinity by marriage', and permits a close union of the family group, is the reasonable and natural relation. The good arising from uniting large numbers of families by the ties of marriage is also the reason for forbidding marriage between relatives: the individual should marry outside his family, joining his own household to another.¹

From these few scattered remarks we can conclude that in Cumberland's opinion the general form of the patriarchal family as it existed in his lifetime could be justified by the laws of nature and reason, as well as by the revealed will of God. Its social expediency, and the satisfaction which it afforded to the psychological impulses of men, proved that the family was a natural institution. If Cumberland's particular arguments appear to lead to a doctrine of expediency, weakening the absolute authority of God as the basis for particular social institutions, he himself did not intend that result: for him, the natural laws dictated by expediency were as eternal and immutable as the laws of God, or mathematics.

In his attempt to settle the family on the firm foundation of natural law, Cumberland had the support of no less an authority than Richard Baxter. Parents, Baxter said, are before kings in the laws of nature: the government of families is exactly defined by natural law, while the form of political government is left to the choice of nations.² To fathers he said, 'Your authority over your children is most unquestionable. They will dispute the authority of ministers, yea, and of magistrates. . . . But the parents authority is beyond all dispute. . . . Therefore father and mother as the first natural power are mentioned rather than kings or queens in the fifth commandment.'³ As the chain which bound together the two most important persons of the household, marriage was a serious social matter, although not all men were mindful of its obligations. Baxter observed that 'it is the pernicious subversion of all societies, and so of the world, that selfish ungodly persons enter into all relations with a desire to serve themselves there . . . but without any sense

¹ pp. 337-8.

² *The Catechising of Families, The Practical Works*, 1830, xix. 197, 23-4 (1681).

³ *Christian Directory*, ii. 517.

of the duty of their relation'.¹ Monogamous marriage was ordained in order that men might be conscious of the duties which accompany cohabitation. Reason as well as divine law establishes the fact that sexual relations must be strictly limited and confined. Without marriage, women, cast out so soon as men had satisfied their lusts, would be left to starve. For the man, not to know which were his own children would be more miserable than not to know which was his own property. And what man would love and feed children who were not certainly his own flesh and blood? All learning, civility, and religion would soon be extinguished, because family education and worship would cease; civil confusions would break out; individual men would degenerate in body and mind. Such would be the result of unlimited promiscuity.²

If any one objected that polygamy would do just as well in setting limits and promoting order, Baxter warned against making the fence too low lest passionate men should jump over. Even the wisest of the heathens agreed that a single wife was the best rule, while the cleanest animals and the birds are monogamists, 'as if God would not have lust come near to heaven'. The Mohammedans, who have many wives, find it necessary to reduce their women to slavery to keep them quiet. When mothers are slaves, men will be brutes.³

The example of the Jews, finally, is not for us to follow. God permitted, although he did not approve, some sins among them, because of the hardness of their hearts. Besides, they had a special excuse in that they were a small people surrounded by enemies: their safety lay in increasing numbers, and they were permitted some inordinancy for multiplication.⁴

Gabriel Towerson, a Fellow of All Souls, Oxford, and later Rector of Walwyn, Hertfordshire, did not agree that promiscuity and polygamy were infractions of the law of

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 520.

² *Ibid.* i. 395-8; *The Reasons of the Christian Religion, Works*, xxi. 14 (1667); *The Catechising of Families*, pp. 218-19; also Swinnock, George, *The Christian-mans Calling: or, a treatise of making religion ones business*, pt. i, ch. xxviii (1662).

³ *Christian Directory*, i. 396.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 398.

nature. The Jews did not sin when they took more than one wife; God had sanctioned the custom because the earth needed peopling. Nevertheless, he said, monogamy is now solidly based on the commands of Christ: if a man commits adultery by putting away one wife and taking a second, surely the same applies if he takes the second wife without putting away the first. St. Paul taught that husband and wife each has a right over the other's body, and it is not likely that wives will consent to share their right.¹

Thus far, then, the monogamous family was, in clerical theory, firmly rooted in the commands of God, and the dictates of reason and nature. The argument from nature, a part of the growing tendency toward rationalism in opposition to the extreme authoritarianism of early Calvinist thought, was used to buttress both the authority of the father and monogamy, the keystones of the family society of the time. So important was this family society, established by nature, that it enjoyed to some extent a sovereignty over which the state had no control. Where the family left off, the state began: instead of the individual, the family was still regarded by clergymen as the basic unit in the composition of the state, although secular thinkers like Hobbes and Locke had come to regard man as the unit.² But the specific importance of the family can best be understood if we examine the particular duties, rights, and purposes of the various individuals within it.

The Book of Common Prayer set out three purposes for which marriage had been ordained. The first of these, the propagation and education of children for the glory of God, was readily accepted by all religious leaders in the seventeenth century. Speaking of procreation as one of the duties of married couples, both Towerson and *The Whole Duty of Man* observed that it was sinful to make use of contraceptives.³

¹ *The Explication of the Decalogue*, Seventh Commandment, pts. i and iv (1676).

² Gierke, Otto, *Natural Law and the Theory of Society, 1500-1800*, 1934, pp. 63, 111; Lawson, George, *Politica Sacra et Civilis: or, a modell of civil and ecclesiasticall government*, p. 10 (1660).

³ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Sixth Commandment, iv; *The Whole Duty of Man*, 1728, p. 173 (1658). Richard Allestree was probably the principal author of *The Whole Duty of Man*, *The Ladies Calling*, *The Gentleman's Calling*, and *The Causes*

In the course of one of the morning lectures kept up by nonconformists in London,¹ Richard Adams said that 'ill arts, either to prevent conception or procure abortion' are displeasing to God who instituted marriage to produce children.² Whether or not this conclusion was drawn, it was agreed that reproduction was a duty. Providing there were no greater reasons to prevent them, men might even marry for no other purpose than to get heirs.³

Secondly, continued the Common Prayer, marriage is a remedy against sin, to prevent fornication, and to relieve those who have not the gift of continency. This second purpose had been a part of Christian social thought since the days of St. Paul. In the Middle Ages, it is true, the Church had approved of the family and marriage as necessary for the preservation and proper organization of society.⁴ But the approbation of the Medieval Church was not without qualification. Celibacy, the rule for the clergy and the monastic communities, was the ideal. Marriage was tolerated as a necessary evil for Fallen Man, and its purpose was to limit sin, not to produce positive virtues.

The sexual relationship was ignored as much as possible, since the purpose of marriage in this respect was limited to the production of children. The mutual love of husband and wife was not an ideal, and was not a justification for the marital relation. Ideas on the subject, whatever individual exceptions occurred, may be summarized by saying that the ideal was celibacy, though marriage was tolerated as a necessity of the Decay of Christian Piety; see *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. 'Dorothy Pakington'.

Mr. John Espey called my attention to the following passage from Donne, *Fifty Sermons* (1649), p. 17: 'As S. August puts the case, to contract before, that they will have no children, makes it no marriage but an adultery: to deny themselves to another, is as much against marriage as to give themselves to another. To hinder it by physick, or any other practise, nay to hinder it so far as by a deliberate wish, or prayer, against children, consists not well with this second use of marriage.'

¹ *The Morning Exercises at Cripplegate, St. Giles in the Fields and in Southwark: being divers sermons preached A.D. 1659-1689*. These six volumes of sermons are a compendium of practical theology by some of the most eminent casuists of the period. Among those sermons preached before the Act of Uniformity are some by Anglicans—e.g. John Tillotson.

² *Sermon XV*, iii. 542.

³ *Christian Directory*, ii. 476, 521.

⁴ Troeltsch, Ernst, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, 1931, pp. 312-13, 324.

sary social and economic institution, which was in fact supplemented by adultery.¹

Proceeding on the assumptions of St. Paul and the Medieval Church, conservative English reformers had retained the theory at this point that celibacy was best, indeed, a gift of God, and that marriage was a lesser good, for those not able to attain the ideal. Such a theory had been rejected by Luther; his own marriage was partly a protest against it.² For Calvin, even more than for Luther, marriage was less a result, and an avoiding, of sin, than a positive good.³ But in England the Anglican Church at the time of the Reformation, while permitting the marriage of priests, clung to the ideal of celibacy and discouraged their marrying. The conception of marriage as a remedy for sin remained in the Prayer Book. Although marriage was no longer regarded as a sacrament, it was kept under ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as if it needed the grace given by the Church to purify it.⁴

English Puritans, however, attacked the idea that marriage was a compromise for the weak, or that it needed the blessing of the Church to make it excusable, even though such a blessing might in itself be good. For them, the natural world was essentially good, however riddled with sin. The heart of man, not God's creation, was corrupt. They could not accept the view that marriage, which was so natural and so necessary, was in itself sinful, or at best, a compromise for wicked men. They accepted no compromises, and did not damn the institutions of the world merely because sinful men perverted them.

William Perkins's *Christian Oeconomie*, published in Latin in 1590, and translated by Thomas Pickering in 1609, may be taken as typical of the Puritan position. One of the purposes of the treatise, as seen in Chapter III, and in Pickering's *Epistle*, was to refute the Popish error that celibacy is

¹ Powell, C. L., *English Domestic Relations, 1487-1653*, New York, 1917, especially pp. 123 ff.; and Schücking, Levin, *Die Familie im Puritanismus*, 1929, pp. 31-4, summarize the medieval attitude towards marriage, and recognize it as a counterpart of feudal social organization. See also C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love*, 1936, ch. i.

² Troeltsch, *Social Teaching*, pp. 544-7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 655.

⁴ Powell, *English Domestic Relations*, pp. 120-1; Schücking, *Die Familie im Puritanismus*, p. 33.

better than marriage. Puritans also attacked the supremacy of the Church in marital matters as a usurpation of the civil government's jurisdiction, and under the Commonwealth civil marriage was instituted. Finally, Milton's attitude in the treatises on divorce, where right marriage is regarded as a positive good, and the regulations concerning it are stated to be a matter of civil policy, is not a revolutionary attitude, but a logical development of Puritan and Reformation theory.¹

When the Prayer Book came back with the Restoration, the theory that marriage was a remedy for sin received official sanction again, and civil marriage was abolished. Conservatives and radicals compromised. *The Whole Duty of Man*, probably written by Richard Allestree, and popular with all denominations throughout the reign of Charles II, said the ends of marriage were these two, 'the begetting of children, and the avoiding of fornication',² but it did not go on to say that celibacy was preferable. George Swinnock was content to repeat the *Common Prayer*.³ Gabriel Towerson, however, omitted any mention of the theory that marriage was a remedy for sin, or that chastity was preferable. Indeed, he said that in the beginning all men were required to marry in order to people the earth. Marriages by priests are to be preferred, he added, but civil marriages are lawful.⁴

Baxter was on the whole a conservative in regard to the marriage question. He included inability to be chaste as a valid reason for marrying, if there were no other hindrances. He quoted the words of St. Paul, to the effect that celibacy is to be preferred, but that it is better to marry than to burn. For 'there is something in a single life', he wrote, 'which maketh it, especially to preachers and persecuted Christians, to be more usually the most advantageous state of life. . . .' However, each individual case must be considered separately: it may at times be a positive duty to marry. No hard rules can determine the matter, but every one, especially ministers

¹ Powell, p. 89.

² p. 173.

³ *The Christian-mans Calling; or, a treatise of making religion ones business*, pt. ii, ch. iii (1662-5).

⁴ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Seventh Commandment, pt. i. This work acquires additional authority by the fact that it was dedicated to Archbishop Sancroft, with his permission, we may suppose. The Archbishop rewarded Towerson with a D.D.

of Christ, should carefully consider the disadvantages of marrying: Baxter lists twenty of them, including the economic, and 'the natural imbecility of the female sex'.¹ Clearly, in his opinion, celibacy had many attractions, while marriage had many disadvantages. Yet although he included physical necessity as a valid reason for marrying, he refused to believe that lust was unconquerable. The strength of sexual desire, he said, is often overestimated: frequently it is only a poor excuse used by ungodly children who wish to marry without the consent of parents.²

Other nonconformists were more outspoken in favour of marriage. Richard Adams damned virginity by calling it a popish ideal,³ and Christopher Nesse dubbed it 'a doctrine of devils'.⁴ Either those persons who prefer celibacy have unclean minds, wrote Samuel Shaw, or they are frigid; and 'it's no thanks to them not to burn who are not combustible. . . .'⁵ The papists, again, were refuted by John Corbet, who said that they preferred celibacy because they believed that taking pleasure in copulation was sinful. The truth of the matter, he continued, is that any sober pleasure is natural and good, and cannot by itself be sinful.⁶

The attack on the ideal of celibacy had long been connected with the struggle against popery, monastic ideals, and the tendency to canalize grace, leaving the natural world to natural reason. The Puritan was determined to make earthly things divine, not by forbidding them, but by infusing them with holiness. So far as marriage was concerned, the attack had succeeded in England; by 1660 the theory that virginity was especially virtuous was all but dead. It was replaced by a belief in the positive moral and religious values of marriage and family life. Although nonconformists, the inheritors of the Puritan tradition, asserted this new belief more vigorously, Anglicans were not hostile to it.

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 475-83. By 'imbecility' Baxter meant weakness.

² *Ibid.*, p. 478.

³ *Sermon XXII, Morning Exercises*, vol. iii.

⁴ *A Christians Walk and Work on Earth until he attain to heaven*, ch. iii (1678).

⁵ *The True Christians Test, or, A Discovery of the Love and Lovers of the World*, ii. 233-7 (1682).

⁶ *Matrimonial Purity*, in *The Remains of the Reverend and Learned Mr. John Corbet* (1684). Corbet was a fast friend of Baxter; Mrs. Corbet was Baxter's housekeeper after her husband's death, *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, iii. 189.

The third purpose for which marriage was ordained, said the Prayer Book, is 'mutual society, help, and comfort'. By emphasizing this aspect of marriage, rather than by a direct attack on the ideal of celibacy, divines overthrew the medieval ideal. Repeating the Prayer Book in giving the reasons for marriage, Thomas Comber, who later became Dean of Durham, went on to say that God put more weight on the third reason, companionship, than on the other two, and that the avoiding of sin did not imply that virginity was preferable.¹ Towerson omitted any mention whatsoever of the remedy for sin: marriage, he wrote, is 'a compact between a man and a woman, of cohabitation during life for the comfort of society, and the propagation of children'.²

The positive benefits of marriage fall into two classes: the benefits to the individuals concerned, and the benefits to society as a whole. We have seen how important marriage was, socially, as the foundation of the family system, and we shall have to refer to it in that connexion again when we examine the problems of children and servants; Baxter had in mind this broad, social aspect when he wrote that marriage might enable a man to be of greater service to the church and to his neighbours; dowries might be used to relieve the poor, offspring would swell the number of good Christians and citizens.³

But an equally important good was the personal one; besides the economic and social benefits, there were the positive moral values for the individuals who married. By emphasizing the virtue and moral good of love and companionship between man and wife, the value of marriage was enhanced. At the same time, the patriarchal structure of the family was weakened.

An essential of the patriarchal system is the power of the parents to choose husbands and wives for their children—a power which necessarily limits the possibility that love and affection will be important in the marriage relation. However much they might hedge it about with restrictions, restoration divines were still clinging to the principle that

¹ *A Companion to the Temple*, pt. iv, Partition I.

² *Explication of the Decalogue*, Seventh Commandment, pt. i.

³ *Christian Directory*, ii. 476.

parents ought to choose for their children. Conservative and aristocratic, *The Whole Duty of Man* stressed the right of the parents. 'Children are so much the goods, the possessions of their parents, that they cannot without a kind of theft, give away themselves, without the allowance of those that have the right in them. . . .'¹ Even so, it should be noted that the question is that of parents' consent, and not their positive command. By 1660 the doctrine that the children should marry whom the parents chose was giving way to the belief that dutiful children would not marry without their parents' permission. So far most divines were prepared to go, but no farther. It was thought that as usual Catholic casuists had overstepped due limits in discovering so many particular cases in which the consent of parents was unnecessary. Rebuking the popish theologians for their error in this matter, William Perkins had stoutly maintained that children might not dispense with the permission of their elders;² David Clarkson, nonconformist and hater of Rome, remarked that Catholic daughters, so far as obedience to parents was concerned, might become whores, for their confessors taught them that they owned their own bodies.³ Samuel Clarke, an old Puritan who had once been curate of St. Bennet Fink, wrote that 'Children are as the goods of their parents, wholly in their power to be ordered, and disposed by them'.⁴

On the other hand—and we may take it for granted that other clergymen agreed with him—the opinion of Richard Adams, that parents have not the right to require anything which conduces to sin, could tend to weaken the position of parents. Samuel Cradock, another minister who was ejected at the Restoration, maintained that it was the duty of parents to consider love as well as the usual matters of religion and dowry when they chose husbands and wives for their

¹ pp. 301-2.

² *Christian Oeconomie*, in *The Works*, 1617-26, iii, Epistle, and ch. xiii.

³ *The Practical Divinity of the Papists discovered to be destructive of Christianity and men's souls* (1672), in *The Practical Works*, 1864-5, iii. 153-5.

⁴ *Medulla Theologiae: or the Marrow of Divinity, contained in sundry questions and cases of conscience, both speculative and practical; the greatest part of them collected out of the works of our most judicious, experienced, and orthodox English divines*, 1659. Clarke quoted Perkins.

children.¹ On this point Gabriel Towerson was firm and explicit. The partners to a marriage, he decided, must be old enough to understand and judge of what they do, and they must give their consent, free from all pressure. Although parents may still refuse their consent, at least their positive command to marry is not binding upon unwilling children, even though their disinclination is no more than antipathy to the partner chosen.² *The Whole Duty of Man* cautiously observed that without 'mutual kindness and liking' marriage was miserable, and that parents ought not to thrust their children into such a state.³ Although it purported to be written by the same author, *The Ladies Calling* was bolder. Daughters are to obey, but, 'as a daughter is neither to anticipate, nor contradict the will of her parent, so (to hang the balance even) I must say she is not obliged to force her own, by marrying where she cannot love; for a negative voice in the case is as much the child's right as the parents.' Without love, marriage is 'only bargain and compact, a tyranny perhaps on the man's part, a slavery on the woman's.'⁴

By far the boldest statement was that of Samuel Shaw. Agreeing that the consent of parents was necessary, he nevertheless said that it was a wrong to hinder children from marrying according to their 'inclinations'. The first consideration should be that 'peace, plenty, purity, satisfaction and contentment which is in a desired conjugal state. . . .' But worse than hindering, is to force children to marry against their wills. 'If there can be any ravishing of a maid without deflowering her, this is it; and it is the more abominable because it is parents ravishing their own children.' Small wonder if such children turn to lovers and mistresses.⁵

Shaw, a dissenting preacher, had pushed the Protestant attitude toward love to the extreme limits. If other men thought the same, they did not express their opinions so forcefully. Most ministers tended to give more emphasis to the power of parents. On the other hand, the conservative

¹ *Knowledge and Practise or a plain discourse on the chief things necessary to be known, believ'd and practised in order to salvation. Drawn up, and principally intended for the use of North-Cadbury in Somersetshire*, pt. ii, ch. iii (1659).

² *Explication*, Fifth Commandment, pt. i; Seventh Commandment, pt. i.

³ p. 316.

⁴ pp. 174-7, 181 (1677).

⁵ *The True Christians Test*, pt. ii, Meditation V (1682).

Bishop of Lincoln, Thomas Barlow, seems to have been the only man to affirm that children were bound to obey the positive command of their parents in marrying.¹

Mrs. Badman had the misfortune to be an orphan with no one to guide her choice. Furthermore, as Mr. Wiseman observed, she alone had been best able to judge of the personal attractions of Badman. But experience had proved that she should have consulted the congregation before marrying. 'It is too much the custom of young people now, to think themselves wise enough to make their own choice.'

Baxter dealt with the problem in the *Christian Directory*. If his opinions were hardly typical, it was because he was the supreme example of the Puritan individualist, weighing and reinterpreting the ideas of his contemporaries according to his own judgement; and as always, he was far too rational in dealing with human emotions.

Three considerations may lead us to marry, he wrote. The first of these is the command of parents; the second is corporal necessity; and the third is the glory of God and the good of human society. The last is the major which takes precedence over the other two. When parents choose a partner and advise marriage in accordance with this third condition, then children ought joyfully to obey. But if this condition is not regarded, then the authority of the father is no longer determinate. In such a case, the command of parents is still to be weighed, and considered as one factor in deciding, but it is not itself decisive.

On the other hand, the prohibition of the ruler of the family is more binding than his positive bidding: for negatives have wider authority than positives: we may sometimes forbear what a lawful ruler commands when we may not act in disobedience to his command. Or, a duty is no longer a duty when a man must commit a sin to perform it, but a duty may require us to forgo a good. Moreover, the plea of the necessity of marrying to avoid the sin of lust will not serve as an excuse for disobeying parents, for lust can be subdued in other ways. Nor may a child urge that he is fond of some one, whom he must marry, or else fall into despair

¹ *Mr. Cottington's Case* (1671), in *Several Miscellaneous and Weighty Cases of Conscience*, 1692, pp. 25-6.

and ruin. Whether such fondness be called love or lust, it is surely sinful if it cannot be restrained by reason and the will of parents.

Thus far, love appears to have fared wretchedly. But in fact, Baxter opened wide the side door. When a man wishes to marry, he wrote, conjugal affection must be taken into account, for without it the duties and sufferings of married life will be too hard to bear. It must be a 'rational love', founded on the 'worth and fitness' of the person, not on blind sexual passion: a love for which no reason can be assigned is not love, but lust or foolishness. Nevertheless, a rational love is necessary, and Baxter lists five rules for choosing a marriage partner who can be so loved. One, the person must not be selfish. Next, choose some one naturally quiet and patient. Thirdly, pick some one with wit, 'for no one can live lovingly . . . with a fool'. Fourthly, seek for a humble partner for quietness' sake. And last, the person should be able to keep silence as well as to speak, 'for a babbling tongue is a continual vexation'.¹

Ascetic by nature, and with the ascetic's dislike of sex, Baxter could find little place for love between man and wife.² But he did admit that some emotional tie was a necessary and valuable part of family life, however he may have failed to apprehend it in other than reasonable forms. So far he was not typical, for religious thought concerning marital relations was not, on the whole, ascetic.

Few men of the Restoration were more otherworldly, more disdainful and distrustful of the pleasures of this earth, than John Bunyan; and he did allow Christian to abandon wife and children to their fate. But the second part depicted Christiana as a loving wife and mother, longing for her husband who had gone before. Bunyan could write of his imprisonment, 'The parting with my wife and poor children hath often been to me in this place as the pulling of my flesh from my bones; and that not only because I am somewhat too fond of these great mercies, but also because I should have often brought to my mind the hardships, miseries, and wants my poor family was like to meet with should I be taken

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 475-85, 551.

² Cf. *A Treatise of Self-Denial, Works*, xi. 204-10 (1660).

from them. . . .’ A jealous God demanded first place, but love of family came second.

But if Baxter was not typical in his opinions about love, he was in his emphasis on the rights of parents in the matter of their children’s marriages. However much the patriarchal principle was weakened by a belief in the value, and moral necessity, of mutual love in marriage, nevertheless, where the consent of parents was the consideration, divines tended to be conservative. The case of Mrs. Badman was of a kind to justify their conservatism: it may seem unpleasant to think of members of the congregation spying on Mr. Badman to see that he was all he said he was, but experience proved that it would only have been Christian prudence, from the economic as well as the religious point of view. Religion, in the opinion of divines, was the most important reason for making parents’ consent necessary, and much advice was given about choosing religious persons and against marrying papists or infidels; but estate was also a consideration.¹ Baxter said it was one factor to be regarded, and he warned poor men against marrying unless they had reasonable security of income.² In the funeral sermon of his friend, Henry Ashurst, alderman and draper of London, he related how, ‘Narrowly escaping the misery of an unsuitable match, he married, on Mr. Ash’s motion, the daughter of one Mr. Risby, who is now his sorrowful widow, having with her about fifteen hundred pounds’.³

Again, Adam Martindale in his autobiography recorded the tragedy of his brother, who sinfully disobeyed his parents and made the worst of a choice between two women, one of whom had a dowry of £40, the other one of £140. Displeased at this, Martindale’s nineteenth-century editor in a footnote to this passage, said with some justification, ‘the mixture of money and morality—the cunning clothing of selfishness under the garb of pious prudence here exhibited, is very characteristic of the man, as well as of his age and station’.⁴

¹ Cradock, Samuel, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xiii; *The Whole Duty of Man*, p. 316.

² *Obedient Patience*, Case III, Counsels 1 and 5, in *Works*, xi. 405–7 (1683).

³ *Faithful Souls Shall be with Christ*, in *Works*, xviii. 147 (1681).

⁴ *The Life*, Chetham Society, vol. iv, Canon Richard Parkinson of Manchester, editor, 1845, p. 16.

Money, however, was not the only consideration of a practical kind. The question of social position was also important. Dining with Sir Edward and Lady Mountagu on October 20, 1660, Samuel Pepys heard the lady mention that she could get a good merchant for her daughter. Sir Edward retorted that he would rather see his child a pedlar, if she married a gentleman, than a rich merchant's wife; and the lady married a gentleman, although she looked very sad on her wedding day. Samuel Clarke noted that the people of the Lowlands had adopted the bad custom of allowing intermarriage of noble and ignoble, master and servant.¹

Jeremy Taylor considered the problem of noble persons marrying into merchant families. Quoting Euripides for authority, he decided, 'If the nobility marries into the family of a merchant, the difference is not so great, but that portion makes up the want of great extraction.' Consequently, if sons and daughters allege difference of birth as an excuse for disobeying parents, it is to be accounted rebellion and disobedience. Nevertheless, social distinctions were to be taken into account by parents; for although difference in station was 'introduced mainly by pride and vanity in all the last ages of the world, and nobility is not the reward of virtue, but the adornment of fortune, or the effect of prince's humours, unless it be in some rare cases, yet now that it is in the humours and manners of men, it is to be regarded, and a diamond is really of so much value as men will give for it. . . .'²

The problem, then, of selecting a husband or wife whose religious, financial, and social qualifications were satisfactory, made it seem reasonable and necessary to retain a large measure of parental control in choosing. That rein was slackened by the proviso that love, as one of the essentials of a successful family life, should be a factor in determining the choice which parents made. But the consent of parents was held to be necessary for the proper maintenance of the family institution, the foundation stone of a social structure

¹ *A Description of the Seaventeen Provinces commonly called the Low-Countries (The present stage of action)*, p. 7 (1672).

² *Ductor Dubitantum*, pt. ii, in *The Whole Works*, 1847, x. 499-500 (1660).

in which difference of status, wealth, and religion could not be ignored.

A further requirement of the patriarchal family was that the father should have authority over the mother. The basis for this authority could be found in the Bible and in natural law. The example of the patriarchal family in the Old Testament and in the teaching of St. Paul, and the supposed natural fact that men were superior in body and mind, were sufficient testimony to support the theory that the father's power was founded in the will of God.¹ Woman was a rib in the body of which man was the head; she was created after man, from man, for man; she was naturally inferior and weak, being easily led into sin. Eve was responsible for the present misery of all humanity.² As *The Whole Duty of Man* remarked, wives are included in the Tenth Commandment as the property and possessions of their husbands, along with houses and cattle.³

If the husband has authority, Baxter said, he ought to exercise it; and for this purpose he should make clear to his family the origin and nature of that authority.⁴ Less was said, however, about the duty of the husband to govern, and more was said about the obedience of the wife. Ordinarily, the proof of the husband's right was followed by an exhortation to the wife to respect that right. Women's duties, it was repeated over and again, are mainly those of subjection and respect.⁵ Samuel Clarke noted that women in the Low Countries had far too much freedom, and were, consequently, impious and troublesome.⁶

Naturally, the husband's authority was not valid if he commanded sin. But, added *The Whole Duty of Man*, if his order is not in defiance of a positive command of God, the wife must obey however much she may dislike it. She may

¹ Bury, Edward, *A Help to Holy Walking, or, a guide to glory*, p. 342 (1675).

² Cradock, Samuel, *Knowledge and Practise*, ch. xi; Baxter, *The Catechising of Families*, pp. 23-4; Swinnock, George, *The Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, ch. v.

³ pp. 233-4.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, ii. 509.

⁵ Gouge, Thomas, *Christian Directions, shewing how to walk with God all the day-long*, in *The Works*, 1706, ch. xxv (1664); *The Ladies Calling*, 5th ed., p. 191 (1677).

⁶ *A Description of the Seaventeen Provinces*, p. 7.

not excuse herself on the grounds that her husband is wicked: his right continues nevertheless.¹ Except when she was ordered to forsake her religion, Mrs. Badman was submissive as a good woman ought to be.

To the husband's right of ruling was tied the duty of providing for his family. He must work to make a living, and he must give a decent allowance to his wife.² In Baxter's opinion, the wife was joint owner of the husband's estate. In law, he thought, the words of the marriage ceremony, 'with all my worldly goods I thee endow', should constitute a legal bond. Consequently, she could take what was necessary to live in a style befitting her station without her husband's consent; she might even take something for charitable purposes.³

On the other hand, a woman has no right to spend more than the family can prudently afford. Positively, she must pay attention to her household duties and account for the expenses. For like ants, said George Swinnock, once a Fellow of Balliol and a nonconformist, man and wife must 'indeavour in their callings to increase their heapes. . .'⁴ The husband should provide, the wife should save.

The husband's authority, however, was limited, just as was the right of parents to arrange marriages for their children, by the obligation to love and cherish. Declaring love to be a positive duty of both man and wife, both Towerson and Thomas Gouge drew the further corollary that this limited the use of force. Towerson said categorically that the husband's power was directive through love, and not coercive. Gouge, who was a prominent nonconformist leader, was less bold, but he agreed that a husband should not beat his wife, because it would do no good in most cases; he added

¹ pp. 323-6. Henry Newcome had the practical problem of deciding about the authority of Mr. Holden over his wife. The question at issue is unknown, but Newcome read over William Gouge's *Domestical Duties* (2nd ed., 1626) and wrote Mrs. Holden a letter in February 1662. See the *Diary*, Chetham Society, 1849, xviii. 54-9.

² Bunyan, *Christian Behaviour, The Whole Works*, 1862, ii. 557 (1663). Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 530.

³ *Christian Directory*, ii. 533-4; Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. 26.

⁴ Swinnock, *The Christian-mans Calling*, ii. 65, and ch. v; Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Seventh Commandment, pt. ii; *Christian Directory*, ii. 532.

that mutual affection was the first duty of husband and wife.¹ Every one who wrote on the subject insisted that father and mother owed one another the duty of love and that this softened the harshness of the duty of subjection. Bunyan warned husbands that their wives were not slaves; and *The Whole Duty of Man*, quoting St. Paul, *Ephesians*, v. 25, 29, said wives were to be loved as men love their own bodies and as Christ loves the Church.² 'Let those husbands that tyrannize over their wives, that scarce use them like human creatures, consider whether that be to love them as their own bodies.'

Even Baxter spoke with some eloquence of the mercies of married life, mutual love, and companionship, which necessarily limited in some degree the rigour of authority and subjection. 'It is a mercy to have a faithful friend that loveth you entirely, and is as true to you as your self, to whom you may open your mind and communicate your affairs, and who will be . . . the daily companion of your lives, and partaker of your joys and sorrows.' As he described it in the life of his wife, Baxter's own marriage was almost idyllic. Of love and respect, however 'rational', there was no lack, and Mrs. Baxter does not seem to have been notably subdued. Sometimes acting against the advice of her husband, she managed her own estate. And she reproved Richard when he was morose. His own marriage, in fact, was good, whatever misgivings Baxter had about marriage in general.

But however much love came to be regarded as one of the principal values, for the individual, of married life, and however much it tended to change the form of the patriarchal family, limiting the power of parents and husband, it was not itself a decisive factor. Instead of determining, it was itself determinable. In all the discussions of the subject, love was thought of as a virtue in which reasonable men and women could train themselves. Before marrying, it is true, Christians were advised to consider the person and temperament of the prospective bride or bridegroom and judge of the

¹ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Seventh Commandment, pt. ii; Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xxiv (1664).

² Bunyan, *Christian Behaviour*, pp. 561-2; *The Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 324-7.

probability of mutual affection developing. But after marriage affection was a moral obligation.¹

Baxter, as we have seen, spoke much of the reasonableness of love; he was only pushing to an extreme a tendency which can be found in the works of most divines who wrote on the subject. In the *Christian Directory* he put conjugal love as the first duty of husband and wife. A divine command revealed to man through St. Paul, it was the seed and the flower of holy marriages. He appended twelve rules as helps to the performance of the duty.

In part, however, these rules are evidence to prove that he saw the difficulty of loving at the divine behest. Choose one, he said, whom you are sure you can love, and do not marry hastily. But then he went on to say, 'remember that justice commandeth you to love one that hath as it were forsaken all the world for you. . . . It is worse than barbarous inhumanity to entice such a one into a bound of love, . . . and then to say you cannot love her'. Further, 'remember that women are ordinarily affectionate, passionate creatures, and as they love much themselves so they expect much love from you. And when you joyned your self to such a nature, you obliged your self to answerable duty'. Of the other incentives, the most important was the necessity of obedience to God's will.²

If love, then, was a force which weakened the principles of paternal authority in the patriarchal family, and set up a new criterion by which to judge of the value and goodness of marriage, on the other hand, the conception of the patriarchal family and its usefulness as a foundation of economic and social life lessened the importance of love. So long as men were unable to marry for love alone, just so long was it impossible to make it the sole touchstone and standard by which to judge between good marriages and bad ones. A compromise was evolved to include both the social purposes and the individual values of companionship and affection. Both should be considered before marriage; and after marriage both were transmuted into duties which reasonable and good men could and should strive to perform. 'Love must not be

¹ *The Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 324-7.

² Pt. ii, pp. 520-1.

exercised so imprudently as to destroy the exercise of authority: and authority must not be exercised over a wife so magisterially and imperiously as to destroy the exercise of love.¹

The attitude of all Protestant churches to the sin of adultery is well known. Yet it is now one of the more frequent sins, and it was no doubt just as common in the seventeenth century. It certainly was in the Court, and Archbishop Sheldon refused communion to the king because of the royal mistresses. Moreover, the Settlement Law of 1662 encouraged bastardy: married men were not allowed to settle for fear they might produce large families who would become burdens on the parish; marriage among the poor was discouraged. Bastardy became one of the main problems of poor relief.²

Adultery was, of course, directly opposed to the positive command of God, and the most elaborate tirades against it come under the heading of the Seventh Commandment. Demoralizing spiritually, mentally, and physically, it was a sin of lust. Moreover, it was an especially popish sin, since the Holy Father gave dispensations to the clergy for the committing of it, and licensed houses of prostitution.³ 'Communists' of the day were also accused of favouring it.

Yet O how many like fed horses neigh
After their neighbours mates: the Brownist strives
For all things to be common, ergo wives.⁴

According to the law of God as interpreted by clergymen, adultery was as sinful for the husband as for the wife. In either case, it destroyed the love which was an essential element of a good marriage.⁵ The more love was stressed, the more sinful adultery seemed to be; it could not be reconciled with proper relations between married couples. To

¹ Ibid., p. 529.

² Hampson, E. M., *The Treatment of Poverty in Cambridgeshire*, 1933, ch. xiii; Marshall, Dorothy, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century*, 1926, pp. 206 ff.

³ Clarkson, *The Practical Divinity of the Papists, Works*, vol. iii, ch. ix (1672).

⁴ Billingsley, Nicholas, *A Treasury of Divine Raptures consisting of Serious Observations, Pious Ejaculations, Select Epigrams*, p. 16 (1667). For Billingsley, a dissenting preacher, see Matthews, A. G., *Calamy Revised*, 1934.

⁵ Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 521; Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. v; *The Whole Duty of Man*, p. 327; Towerson, *Seventh Commandment*, iii.

entice another man's wife, observed *The Whole Duty of Man*, robs him of that love and fidelity 'which of all other things he accounts most precious'.¹

Nevertheless, in some ways, the sin of the wife admittedly had the more disastrous consequences. For one thing, a sinful wife is likely to bring into the family a bastard.² Hence *The Whole Duty of Man* included seduction under the head of theft: the wife's love is stolen from her husband, the estate descends to another man's heir, and the lawful children are robbed of their just portions.³ To the woman's adultery, too, is added the sin of disobedience to her husband's command.

Although they disowned and condemned the aristocratic prejudice which distinguishes between the sexual irregularities of the husband and those of the wife, clergymen could not deny the hard facts. Because the family was so important a unit in society, because of the special position and function of the wife within that unit, her casual amours were fraught with the greater consequences in 'respect to civil and worldly considerations'.⁴

Closely connected with the question of adultery was that of divorce. The canon law provided for separation, divorce *a mensa et thoro*, without permission to remarry, on the grounds of cruelty or adultery, and for annulment in case the marriage could be proved invalid. At the time of the Reformation, ecclesiastical courts in England, having the sole jurisdiction over divorce proceedings, apparently tried to introduce divorce, *a vinculo matrimonii*, with the right of marrying again, and this was provided for in Henry VIII's *Reformatio Legum*. But the power of the church courts to dissolve marriage was denied in 1602, and Henry's legislation failed to pass.⁵ No divorce which gave the right to marry again was permitted in England.

Among the Puritans in the Church of England, however, the belief was strong that divorce *a vinculo* was lawful in cases of adultery, cruelty, and even of desertion and incompatibility.

¹ p. 235.

² Towerson, Seventh Commandment, iii.

³ pp. 233-8.

⁴ *The Whole Duty of Man*, p. 327.

⁵ Holdsworth, W. S., *A History of English Law*, 5th ed., 1931, i. 621-4.

William Perkins advocated these views in his *Christian Oeconomy*, and Milton pushed them to the extreme in his tracts on divorce. The criticism of the divorce laws was a part of the Puritan attack on the ecclesiastical courts.¹ During the Commonwealth, civil marriages and divorce *a vinculo* for adultery and desertion were introduced. But in 1660 marriage and divorce were again put under the jurisdiction of the Church, and there was no provision for dissolving marital ties so that the parties could remarry. Parliament did, however, legitimize all marriages contracted after 1642.² Thus the question was settled until 1857: divorces could be had only by Act of Parliament.

In the period after 1660 the situation was not favourable for advocating reforms in the law of divorce, any more than in other fields of law, and the controversy was dropped. This was the more easily done since even the reformers agreed that God did not command that men be given the right to marry again after divorce, but only negatively did not command the contrary. In more conservative Anglican circles, it was held that all divorce was unlawful. In 1671, one Mr. Cottington married an Italian lady who had been divorced from her former husband in the court of the Archbishop of Turin. Three years later, Mr. Cottington suffered an attack of conscience and renounced his adulterous marriage. Suing in the Court of Arches, the wife obtained judgement for restoration of marital relations, the Court having no power to review the judgement of the Italian Archbishop. Appealing to Allestree, the Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, and to Thomas Barlow, Bishop of Lincoln, Mr. Cottington was advised to disregard the judgement of the Court. For in the opinion of the Professor and the Bishop, God did not sanction divorces.³

John Corbet, however, strongly attacked the idea that divorce in all cases was forbidden by divine law.⁴ If the law

¹ Perkins, ch. x; Powell, *English Domestic Relations*, ch. iii.

² Powell, *ibid.*; Holdsworth, *History of English Law*, vi. 419, 410.

³ *Mr. Cottington's Case, concerning the Validity or Nullity of his Marriage with Gallina (her former Husband then living) Anno 1671, in Several Miscellaneous and Weighty Cases of Conscience, Learnedly and Judiciously Resolved by the Right Reverend Father in God Dr. Thomas Barlow (1692).*

⁴ *Matrimonial Purity*, in *The Remains*.

denied the right to marry again, the prohibition had to be justified on the grounds of expediency, not religion. There was nothing in the law of God, said Gabriel Towerson, to prevent complete divorce on the grounds of adultery, or uncleanness equal to it. But the state might prohibit the dissolution of marriages because of the danger of collusion.¹

Baxter decided that complete divorce on the grounds of incompatibility alone was inadmissible, being opposed to the law of God and the common good of society. Because there could be no certainty that the husband and wife who separated would not eventually become reconciled to one another, neither had the right to marry again. Adultery, however, was a sufficient ground for complete divorce; men and women were equal in this respect, so that either husband or wife should be able to sue on this ground. Further, Baxter answered affirmatively the question, 'Is not the case of sodomy or buggery a ground for warrantable divorce, as well as adultery?' Lastly, in case of complete desertion, he counselled the deserted party not to remarry; but if the person 'should have an untameable lust', he would not say that marrying again was unlawful.²

By 1660 the debate between Conservatives and Progressives over the questions of divorce and marriage was commonplace. Twenty years earlier, John Milton had stated the case against the Conservatives. Attacking the Catholic theory of marriage, he went on to maintain that the happiness of individuals was its only justification. He demanded divorce with the privilege of marrying again on the simple grounds of incompatibility, and prophesied that adultery and prostitution would disappear if persons unsuited to one another were not forced by laws to continue husband and wife. No divine of the Restoration argued the protestant position to its conclusion with the logical vigour of *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*.³

¹ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Seventh Commandment, pt. iii.

² *Christian Directory*, ii. 535-9.

³ Likewise, no one stated the traditional doctrine of marriage with such cynical realism as did Halifax in his *Advice to a Daughter* (1688).

The relations between man and wife, then, were still thought of in terms of the patriarchal family. The religious leaders of the Restoration had inherited these ideas from their predecessors, and they had found some justification for them in the Word. And although patriarchal organization had been more essential for feudal society,¹ a certain amount of control in the hands of the husband and father was undoubtedly prudent and necessary for English society in 1660 and thereafter. When the family was the basic economic and social unit, and when differences in wealth divided men into classes, it was necessary that individuals should act for the good of the family, and not according to their own whims. Moreover, it was not only wealth, the standard of a bourgeois society, which divided family from family, but also differences of rank and heredity. However bourgeois English society really was, and however easily and often men moved from one class to another when their wealth increased or decreased, nevertheless, the forms of the feudal hierarchy were retained. Unlike the French, the English bourgeoisie abolished neither the landed estates, nor the titular trappings of aristocracy. If it is important to realize that the English aristocracy and gentry were moneyed men and capitalists, it is also important to remember that they thought of social divisions as existing, to some extent at least, on other foundations, such as heredity, ability, and political necessity.

Thus prudence plainly dictated that individuals should consider the framework of the social hierarchy in marrying, and that their marriage should have some regard for the family unit. After marriage, again, the interests of the individual had to be subordinated to the interest of the family of which he was a part. For this purpose, the patriarchal system, which vested authority in the hands of the father, was admirably suited, and religious leaders supported it.

Nevertheless, as is well known, social relations in a bourgeois society tend to be thought of in terms of contracts between free individuals, not in terms of status. The same idea may be traced in regard to marriage from the Reforma-

¹ Engels, Friedrich, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, Chicago, 1902, has some valuable remarks on the relation between the organization of the family and the general social structure.

tion onwards. The consent of the individuals was thought to be necessary for a valid marriage contract, as we have seen; the English courts, during the first half of the seventeenth century laid down the general principle that this free consent ought to precede the marriage ceremony.¹ Towerson stressed the 'compact' as the essence of valid marriage, so that if a man should choose a wife, intending to be faithful, and is faithful, yet he is an adulterer unless he has made a formal contract. For social reasons, the contract ought to be made publicly, preferably before a priest; but he was willing to admit civil marriage.² The extreme contract theory of marriage was put forward by Locke in Chapter VII of the *Second Essay on Government*. In attacking Filmer he denied that the father had any special authority within the family, except over children before they reached the age of reason. Although civil laws might prohibit it, after children were grown up and educated, there was nothing in the law of nature which prohibited divorce by mutual consent. Like other contracts, marriage could be dissolved by the agreement of both parties. Religious leaders of the Restoration were not prepared to admit the contract theory in this extreme form; and in practice divorce *a vinculo* was impossible except by private Act of Parliament. But at least three important divines asserted that divorce which empowered the parties to marry again was not contrary to the law of God.

A rigid theory of contract would require that the contracting parties be equals: for a contract which has no other validity than the free consent of the persons can only be made when the persons are in fact equally free. This principle was, of course, not always recognized in practice. Still, the doctrine of the natural equality of individuals usually accompanied the theory that social relations were the result of contracts. Hence in regard to marriage, the tendency was to raise the position of women and make them the equals of men. Woman was still the 'weaker vessel', but she was given a higher place in the family, and the authority of the husband over her was considerably curtailed. In particular, Restora-

¹ Holdsworth, *History of English Law*, vi. 646.

² *Explication of the Decalogue*, Seventh Commandment, pt. i.

tion divines were inclined to accept the opinion that the adultery of the husband was as wicked as the adultery of the wife. Even here, however, women did not achieve complete equality: clergymen could not ignore the point of view of the patriarchal family, in which the wife's sin had the worse consequences, destroying the right and authority of the husband, and possibly thrusting illegitimate heirs into the inheritance. It cannot be doubted, however, that the partial breakdown of the rigid patriarchal system did tend to free women from their subjection to men, a tendency which can be especially noted in protestant America.¹ Even in Restoration England, women had begun to climb towards that economic equality which is a necessary prelude to an equal marriage relation. They engaged in trades and crafts, and were admitted as members of some guilds.²

The emphasis put upon the value of romantic love unified all these forces which were undermining the older idea of the family. It was love which limited the power of parents to choose partners for their children, and which limited the authority of husband over wife. Lastly, it was the beauty of love which made the sin of adultery seem so black. Religious leaders stressed the mutual affection and comradeship of husband and wife, and made it a justification and a principal value of married life. Adultery, which destroyed this ideal relationship, or was an evidence that it existed only imperfectly, became a terrible sin in their eyes. But it is a mistake to emphasize this bitter hatred of adultery, so common in the religious literature of the seventeenth century, especially among nonconformists, without giving equal emphasis to the praise of legitimate love within the bonds of marriage, just as great a virtue as adultery was a sin.

Thus divines prepared the way, in the first place, for the middle-class ideal which became dominant in the nineteenth

¹ Troeltsch, Ernst, *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, pp. 809-10. Religious thought was, of course, not the sole intellectual tradition which registered a change in the family institution. There were also the rationalists, of which Locke is an example, and the humanists. Juan Luis Vives, the Italian humanist who was influential with Henry VIII, and was partly responsible for the Tudor poor laws, also wrote two books on the family, stressing the importance of love. Powell, *English Domestic Relations*, ch. iv.

century: the ideal of the monogamous family founded on mutual love; and in the second place, for a still more modern idea of marriage: a relation justified solely by the mutual affection of the partners, and the necessity of divorce when this justification no longer exists. Even the condonation of adultery where legal and economic restrictions make divorce or marriage impossible, is a logical result of this exaltation of mutual love.

II THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN

NOT less important than the propagation of children, the first purpose of marriage, was their education. For the aim was not merely to produce men: it was to produce faithful Christians and good English citizens. Authority and discipline were the means.

No one doubted the right of father and mother to control the lives of children. By the law of nature, sons and daughters, since they were the creation of their parents, were the property of their parents; by the law of God, they were the subjects of the family magistrates. In Israel, fathers had had the right to sell their children as slaves. A disobedient child, wrote Towerson, flouts the duties of nature and the revealed will of God.¹

In order that they might keep up the authority which was theirs, parents were advised to treat their children as inferiors, not as equals, and to rule them at a proper distance. For contempt is the twin of familiarity.² If an icy condescension failed to chill the hot blood of a stubborn youngster, divines did not hesitate to recommend the whip.³ Mr. Badman's father, although ineffectually, had used the rod of correction, sanctioned by God to keep children from hell. Proverbs, xxii. 15; xxiii. 13, 14.

Authoritarianism, however, was not intended or expected to destroy affection. It was a settled maxim that parents should only chastize children as a last resort: the best way was to direct them by love. When that failed, punishment might be necessary, but it should never be executed in anger, or without explaining that its purpose was the good of the child—the purpose of an affectionate parent. Divines also objected to wet nurses: the bond of love which should unite mother and offspring, as well as considerations of health and

¹ Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Fifth Commandment, pt. i; also Barrow, Isaac, *Exposition of the Decalogue*, Fifth Commandment, *Works*, vol. vii.

² Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 543; Lee, Samuel, *Sermon VIII, Morning Exercises*, i. 148.

³ Lee, *ibid.*, p. 154; Towerson, *ibid.* iv; Baxter, *ibid.*, p. 147; *The Whole Duty of Man*, p. 309.

moral education, required that mothers should feed their own children.¹

The right of the father to govern his children obliged him to maintain them. The obligation to provide for children, said Towerson, was one imposed by the common consent of mankind, and the laws of nature and God.² Proper provision, moreover, included saving portions in order that children might keep up their proper station in life. For 'it seems not suitable to the common, and most impartial judgement of mankind', observed Robert South, 'that one of a noble family and extraction should be put to hedging and ditching, and be forced to support himself with the labour of his hands, and the sweat of his brow'.³ Thomas Gouge and Baxter, too, adhered to the belief that the provision of an inheritance was the will of God, though they feared that in practice most men alleged saving portions for their children as an excuse for covetousness. If children were quite wicked, they ought to be cut off from the family without portions, because the natural bonds of love and pride should never be allowed to overrule considerations of religion.⁴ Ordinarily, however, God favoured inheritance; he had implanted in human nature the desire to leave fortunes to one's children. Men, said Cumberland, have a natural desire for progeny to carry on their name and position. What man, asked Towerson, could be persuaded to do public service, if the reward of praise did not extend to his posterity as well as to himself? Without the natural affection of father for son, said Baxter, civilization would come to an end; for if a man did not know that children were his own, he would not love, keep, and educate them.⁵

The fortunate children of religious parents not only in-

¹ Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 532; Swinnock, *Christian-mans Calling*, ii. 21; Burnet, Gilbert, *Thoughts on Education*, ed. by John Clarke, 1914, p. 14; Adams, Richard, *Sermon XVII, Morning Exercises*, ii. 325; *Ladies Calling*, p. 203.

² Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Fifth Commandment, pt. iv; Swinnock, *ibid.*, p. 22; Adams, *ibid.*, p. 325.

³ *Sermon X*, in *Sermons*, 1737-44, iv. 422; Swinnock, *ibid.* ii. 27.

⁴ Baxter, *The Crucifying of the World by the Cross of Christ*, *Works*, ix. cccxv-cccxi (1658); Gouge, *The Surest and Safest Way of Thriving*, *Works*, p. 149 (1673).

⁵ Cumberland, *Treatise*, p. 347; Towerson, *ibid.* pt. iv; Baxter, *The Reasons of the Christian Religion*, *Works*, xxi. 14 (1667); Barrow, Isaac, *Exposition of the Decalogue*, *Theological Works*, vii. 480-3.

herited fortunes, but also enjoyed allowances during their fathers' lifetimes. If a young man could not earn enough to live according to his rank, the minister of the parish advised the father to make up the deficit. Otherwise, children would be tempted to think unfilial thoughts, or supply their wants by sinful means.¹

On the other hand, sons and daughters had a duty to support needy parents. For parents to live in lesser style than their children was contrary to the intention of the Fifth Commandment. To support father and mother as superiors was not to give alms, but homage. Economic independence did not free children from filial duties. When children reached the age of reason and earned their own livings, the authority of parents was no doubt diminished in some degree. Yet the mere fact that a man exists makes him the debtor of his parents beyond all possibility of repayment.² Besides, a child is under contract to maintain his elders: parents agree to provide for their young on condition that they themselves be provided for in old age.³

Thus religion elaborated a moral theory which was adapted to the family institution as it existed in the seventeenth century, and which at the same time tended to give support to that system. Divines did what they could to ensure that individual families would maintain their rank from generation to generation. In order to secure the economic unity of the family, in order to make certain that the interests of the family would take precedence over those of the individual, authority was placed in the hands of the father; and he was commanded to use his authority in the interests, not of himself, but of his patriarchy. As the family was in fact the primary social unit, for the upper classes at least, so it was reckoned in moral theory.

However important were economic duties in the family group, divines were much more concerned about the educational function of the household. The family was a church,

¹ Towerson, *ibid.*; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xiii; Adams, Richard, *Sermon XVIII, Morning Exercises*, ii. 343-4; *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 311-12.

² Towerson, *ibid.* pt. ii; Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 550-1; *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 302-4.

³ Cumberland, p. 69.

and consequently, like all churches it had to make arrangements for teaching its members. For the benefit of the profane, and some heretical sects, who denied the duty of family religious instruction, Baxter defended it by reason and the Bible. The family, he said, was known to be an institution founded by God, and it had been given special advantages for worship and teaching. First, there was the authority of the father which was beyond all dispute. Further, the love which united the family, the fact that the members lived together in close communion, and the economic power of the head over his children, were all obvious advantages for teaching and discipline. The consequence was that these advantages should be used, for God requires men to use and improve the talents which He grants to them, and loving parents should certainly want to use every opportunity of ensuring the salvation of their children. In addition, there were the examples and positive commands of Scriptures, which Baxter catalogued for the use of families.¹

Lastly, the welfare of Church and State depended upon family teaching. Those divines who thought of the household as the root and foundation of the larger social groups were mindful in particular of the domestic training of Christians and citizens. Unless the father fulfilled his duty as king and priest in disciplining and instructing, the family was no firm foundation. Baxter summarized the reasons which should convince the paterfamilias of the importance of training his children, but all his reasons may be found separately in the works of other men. Education was universally agreed upon as the most important function of the head of the family.²

Some nonconformists noticed that religious education brought practical advantages to the individual, besides salvation. A child who has been taught properly, said Baxter, will be glad to support his aged parents later on. Others agreed that religious children were the most obedient and

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 493-500, 512-18.

² *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 306-8; Manton, Thomas, *Sermon on Psalm cxxvii.* 3 in *A Fourth Volume*, pp. 839-40; Swinnock, *Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, ch. i; Stockton, Owen, *A Treatise of Family Instruction: wherein it is proved to be the duty of parents and masters of families to train up their children and servants in the knowledge of the Scriptures* (1672).

diligent, and even that religious instruction was the best way to put children in the way of becoming thrifty and rich.¹

The formal part of family instruction consisted mostly of reading the Bible, memorizing some parts of it, catechizing, and reading pious books. An able father might be prepared to expound the meaning of difficult passages of Scripture, recapitulate the minister's sermons, and deliver lectures on practical duties. To help him in his task, there were hundreds of family books: expositions of the Word, of the catechisms, prayers, creeds, and of the Decalogue, besides all the general books of practical morality. *The Whole Duty of Man*, 'necessary for all families', was divided into seventeen 'Sundays' so that if one section were read each Sabbath, the whole could be read three times a year. Baxter wrote several books to be used in family instruction, including the *Christian Directory*, and in that work he printed other titles for the use of the poorest families.² Books for the use of families, including such masterpieces as *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, constituted one of the most important categories of seventeenth-century literature. All bodies of English religious opinion agreed as to their value in promoting true piety. Family devotions and instruction were not unknown before the Reformation. But it was the Puritans, insisting upon every individual comprehending the Bible and the principles of religion, who elevated the family into a Church. The importance of the family book dates from the Reformation in the sixteenth century;³ the growth of family instruction was part of the movement whose battle cries were justification by faith, and the Bible a sufficient guide.

But if the people were to profit from the Scriptures and books of practical divinity, they had to be able to read. John Tillotson, in a sermon at St. Lawrence Jewry, advised all masters of families to teach reading, 'because this will make the business of instruction much easier', and John Goodman

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 518; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, ii, ch. x; Gouge, *The Christian Householder*, in *Works*, p. 326 (1663); Stockton, *ibid.*, p. 55; Swinnock, *ibid.*, pt. i, p. 521.

² Pt. ii, pp. 580-1; pt. iii, p. 922; Tillotson, John, *Three Sermons on the Education of Children*, in *Works*, 1722, vol. iii.

³ Schücking, *Die Familie im Puritanismus*, ch. iii.

thought it was a necessary part of religious education. Illiteracy and atheism go hand in hand, said Swinnock; if parents realized the importance of reading they would beg from every person in the parish to get books and teachers. Every child should learn to read: otherwise he will be deprived of a very great help to his education and salvation.¹

But it was obvious that the quickest way to overcome illiteracy—and the only way when parents themselves could not read—was to establish reading or elementary schools. Here trained persons could teach reading, writing, a little arithmetic, and even a smattering of Latin. The great educational reformers of the Interregnum had envisaged and worked for a comprehensive system of free elementary education for all children, and the government had set its hand to the wheel. In Wales it is known that more than sixty free schools were established, all of them to disappear at the Restoration.² After 1660 the great Puritan schemes for universal primary education collapsed, so far as the State was concerned; the sequestered estates of the Church and the royalist laity, which had been used to finance the state grants, returned to their owners. Altogether, the Restoration was not a favourable period for advocating expensive social reforms depending upon state aid, and the great hopes and promises of the Commonwealth were forgotten. If the English people were to learn to read, private charity must pay the bill.

In fact, no religious leader in England denied that a literate population was desirable, while more than one publicly urged charitable persons to set up reading schools. The most famous educational philanthropist of his time was the Rev. Thomas Gouge, who was vicar of St. Sepulchre's until he was ejected in 1662. His work was mainly in South Wales, where he set up schools and gave away Bibles and pious

¹ Tillotson, *A Sermon* preached at St. Lawrence-Jewry, 31 July, 1684, in *Works*, vol. iii; Goodman, *The Old Religion Demonstrated*, p. 275; Swinnock, *Christians Calling*, pt. ii, pp. 22-3; Steele, Richard, *The Husbandmans Calling*, 1672, ch. ii, sect. 4 (1st ed. 1668); Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 548, 582; Adams, Richard, *Sermon XVII in Morning Exercises*, ii. 330-1.

² James, Margaret, *Social Problems and Policy During the Puritan Revolution*, 1930, pp. 322-3; Watson, Foster, *The State and Education under the Commonwealth*, in *E.H.R.*, January, 1900.

books. He recommended reading schools as one of the worthiest objects of charity. The most powerful ministry, he said, is helpless before an ignorant audience. Especially in the country ignorance prevents men from being either religious or civilized. Hence, schools are more important than almshouses which too often harbour idle drones and produce no enduring good.¹

Tillotson, Dean of Canterbury and Canon of St. Paul's, one of the most famous preachers in England, delivered the sermon at Gouge's funeral in 1682. He spoke with praise of the 'excellent designs' in Wales, educating the poor in reading and religion, both children and adults. The funeral sermon was in fact a very commendatory biography of Gouge and was published as an introduction to his *Works* in 1706, after Tillotson had become Archbishop of Canterbury.

Baxter, too, had nothing but praise for the efforts of Gouge. Twice he publicly recommended supporting reading schools, especially in Wales where, he pointed out, Mr. Gouge was already doing a noble work. The *Reliquiae* records the death of that worthy man by an account of his philanthropic activities, to which he devoted two-thirds of an annual income of £150, and for which he begged much more from rich patrons. Baxter lamented that so good a man, his very dear friend whose work was commended by all people, and who faithfully attended the services of the Church of England, was nevertheless excommunicated when he attempted to preach by the permission of an old University licence granted before the Act of Uniformity.² Legally, the Act of Uniformity and the Five Mile Act of 1665 forbade him to teach in any of his own schools, although some loop-holes were found in these Acts in Bates's case in 1670.³

Baxter's writings show that he had himself a very great interest in elementary and religious education among the masses of the people. At Kidderminster, he records, part of his success was the result of giving away more than 800 books,

¹ *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 225-6; *A Sermon of Good Works*, in *Works*, pp. 586-7.

² *Crucifying of the World*, Preface, in *Works*, vol. ix; *Christian Directory*, iv. 191; *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, ii. 147-8, 190-1 (1696).

³ Parker, Irene, *Dissenting Academies in England*, 1914, p. 49; DeMontmorency, J. E. G., *State Intervention in English Education to 1833*, 1902, is a useful summary.

and presenting Bibles to every family that could not afford them. The epistles to two of his practical works contain an appeal to the rich to buy these books and distribute them among the poor. He heartily commended the work of his friends, Alderman Henry Ashurst who set up schools and distributed books in his native county, Lancashire, and Thomas Foley who founded an elementary school at Stourbridge.¹

Speaking of poor tenant farmers, he recounted the many evil results of their poverty, the worst of which was that 'they cannot spare their children from work while they learn to read, though I offer to pay the schoolmaster myself. . . . So that poverty causeth a generation of barbarians in a Christian, happy land.'²

The most vigorous attack which he made on the illiteracy of the poor farm tenants came in his last treatise, which remained unpublished until the twentieth century. Their heaviest burden, he said of the poor husbandmen, is that they lack the time and ability to read of the heavenly life; in effect they are no better off than Papists who are forbidden to read the Bible. There are many learned men in England, and the invention of printing was a blessing for knowledge and religion, but what use is learning and printing if men cannot read, or are too poor to buy books? Ignorance is surely the prelude to popery. The remedy is for landlords to hire teachers, buy books, and not only to allow their tenants time to read, but even to require them to read as part of their work. The tenants themselves should try to learn reading, even if they must beg the books. If popery prevails and the monastic lands are recaptured by the Church, landlords will be sorry they did not spend a few pounds educating the poor.³

The author of *The Husbandmans Calling* listed ignorance and the lack of desire to improve among the great sins and temptations against which he advised poor farmers to

¹ *Reliquiae*, i. 89, iii. 93; *A Paraphrase on the New Testament*, Epistle (1685); *Poor Man's Family Book*, Works, xix. 295; *Faithful Souls Shall Be With Christ*, in Works, vol. xviii.

² *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 364.

³ *The Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, ed. by F. J. Powicke, 1926 (completed in 1691). References to education are scattered throughout this short work.

struggle. Richard Kidder, the future bishop of Bath and Wells, recommended reading schools as one of the best kinds of charity.¹

A number of school books were written by nonconformist ministers, many of whom turned to teaching in spite of the laws, when ecclesiastical positions were closed to them. The title of Thomas Lye's spelling-book is a sufficient indication of the religious motive in education: *A New Spelling Book: or, reading and spelling English made Easie. Wherein all the words of our English Bible are set down in alphabetical order, and divided into their distinct syllables.* Lye, one of the ejected ministers, lamented in the introduction to his book that so few people could read and write. He instructed teachers to divide classes into pupils of equal ability, and make them work hard: if any child is not paying attention, he should be shamed by being asked to tell the place.

Tobias Ellis, another of the ejected Commonwealth preachers, wrote *The English School: containing a catalogue of all the words in the Bible . . . being the readiest way for teaching children, and elder persons, to spell, pronounce, read, and write true English. . . . Fitted to the common use of English Schools, being the first that ever came forth in this method.* A fifth edition was published in 1680.²

Thus it appears that all sections of religious opinion were in favour of reading and writing schools, many of which also taught arithmetic, for the whole population. Although the motive was mainly religious—the desire to read the Bible and the many treatises on practical morals—yet there were also 'the commercial and industrial motives which usually, in part, actuate proposals for educational change'.³ The expansion of commerce and industry, and the growth of scientific agriculture, demanded a literate population, ready to learn and to seize new opportunities. Better methods of keeping accounts, working the land, or producing manufac-

¹ Steele, Richard, ch. v; Kidder, *Charity Directed: or the Way to Give Alms* (1676).

² Ellis asked the Earl of Bedford to help him with the sixth printing of the book. *MS. Rawlinson Letters* 109, f. 30. [Bodleian Library.] The Earl responded with a gift of £2. Thomson, G. S., *Life in a Noble Household, 1641-1700*, 1937, p. 270.

³ Adamson, J. W., *Pioneers of Modern Education, 1600-1700*, 1905, Preface.

tured goods, could be taught by way of printed propaganda.¹ More important, however, was the fact that the religious farmer, weaver, or tradesman, spiritualized by the pious books written for his benefit, was not infrequently the best type of individual, judged by economic standards. Naturally, the divines spoke chiefly of the religious motives, though John Goodman did say that a good Christian ought to found a school in his native parish in order to enrich it. Education, he wrote, is better than introducing a new manufacture, for though the industry might give work to many poor families, it also tends to attract many unemployed from surrounding regions.²

Technical education for commerce, industry, some of the professions, and even agriculture, was commonly provided by the system of apprenticeship. It was still illegal to follow most trades without having served under a master for seven years, but in practice, as the power of the guilds declined, the law was often ignored. However, apprenticing was still the custom, and religious leaders accepted it as one of the normal methods by which parents could give their children the training demanded by God and nature. Religion and prudence alike directed that children be brought up to practise some useful trade in order to avoid that great snare of the Devil, idleness, to make their living, and to be profitable to the commonwealth. They must, in short, have an honest calling.³ Such a calling was necessary both for religious and for economic reasons. Parents were to take especial care to choose godly masters for their children.⁴ Mr. Badman's father apprenticed his son to a pious man when he despaired of reforming the boy at home.

Poor parents were often unable, however, to make the payments asked by masters who took children as apprentices. Consequently, charitable persons were urged to assist.

¹ Adam Martindale, a nonconformist minister, published an almanac for farmers, and some articles on manuring land in John Houghton's *Collection of Letters for the Improvement of Husbandry and Trade*, 1681-3.

² *The Old Religion Demonstrated*, p. 382.

³ *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 308, 311; Adams, Richard, *Sermon XVII in Morning Exercises*, ii. 338-9; Gouge, *Christian Directions*, in *Works*, ch. xxvi.

⁴ Swinnoek, *The Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, p. 23; Lee, Samuel, *Sermon VIII, in Morning Exercises*, i. 160; *Christian Directory*, ii. 548.

Baxter recommended apprenticing the poor as a worthy charity, along with teaching them to read and giving them books; Thomas Gouge quoted with approval the will of William Pennoyer, a merchant of London, who left money for four reading schools, and for apprenticing poor children. This laudable form of charity was followed by Robert South, who left £100 for apprenticing twenty Welsh youths to good honest trades.¹

Technical schools, mostly philanthropic, provided another method of educating children for trade and manufacture.² Simon Ford, who became the vicar at Old Swinford, Worcestershire, advocated that the boys at Bridewell be given a technical education to prepare them for making a living.³ Tillotson may have been thinking of these schools when he said: 'We may take a child that is poor and destitute of all advantages of education, and bring him up in the knowledge and fear of God, and without any great expence put him into a way wherein by his diligence and industry he may arrive at a considerable fortune in the world, and be able afterwards to relieve hundreds of others.'⁴ Finally, Stillingfleet preached that educational philanthropists should not neglect commercial training, nor value the 'learning of arts and sciences to the disparagement of breeding up men for trade and business'.⁵

The Revival of Learning and the Reformation had done little in England to modernize secondary education by breaking down the narrow and traditional specialization of

¹ *Christian Directory*, iv. 191; Gouge, *The Surest and Safest Way of Thriving*, p. 133, in *Works* (1673). For Pennoyer see below, p. 129. South, Last Will and Testament in *Posthumous Works*, 1717. Parishes were empowered under the Elizabethan Poor Law to apprentice poor children, and the practice continued with increasingly bad results. See Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 181-206; Webb, Sydney and Beatrice, *The Old Poor Law*, 1927, pp. 196 ff.

² These schools were becoming more and more popular from 1660 onwards. Watson, Foster, *The English Grammar Schools to 1660*, 1908, Introduction; Adamson, *Pioneers of Modern Education*, p. 202. They had been widely advocated by the great reformers of the Commonwealth. Some parish workhouses were supposed to teach children a trade.

³ *The Blessednesse of Being Bountiful*, p. 135 (1674). This sermon was printed at the request of the Governors of Bridewell.

⁴ *Sermon XVIII, Works*, iii. 193.

⁵ *Of Protestant Charity*, Easterweek, 1681, *Works*, 1710, i. 312.

the grammar schools and providing a liberal training in the arts and sciences for the middle and upper classes. The great movement for the reformation of the system of secondary education arose principally in the period of the Commonwealth. Samuel Hartlib, John Dury, and John Commenius are well-known names; the Commonwealth government showed greater interest in the problem than any other government until the nineteenth century. It was the golden period of educational reform in England.

To create schools whose curriculum and methods should be adapted and related to everyday life was the aim of the reformers. The grammar schools, they complained, teaching little but grammar and rhetoric, providing mental discipline and training according to an Aristotelian theory of knowledge, did not fit men for the business of living. Following the teaching of Bacon, and taking account of the work of humanists and natural scientists, the reformers insisted on the importance of content as well as discipline, and at the same time they tried to change the discipline: they wanted a curriculum encyclopaedic in its range, including languages, natural science, history, technology, and in general, all the arts and sciences which were useful and contributed to a knowledge of everyday life; they wanted to introduce the empirical and experimental method, based on a sensationalist theory of psychology, which was so successful in the field of science. Education was to be adapted to the needs of the commercial and industrial classes, and not to be conducted solely for the purpose of producing schoolmen.¹

But the reformation of the grammar schools lost ground after 1660, although new subjects were slowly introduced. Dr. John Worthington, who had been vice-chancellor of Cambridge in 1657-8, and who became a prebendary of Lincoln in 1666, carried on a lively correspondence with Hartlib just preceding and after the Restoration. He was especially interested in the schemes of Commenius for reforming the methods of teaching.² But he does not appear

¹ The best books are those by Foster Watson, J. W. Adamson, Irene Parker, and J. E. G. DeMontmorency. A useful summary is contained in James, *Social Problems and Policy During the Puritan Revolution*, pp. 314-26.

² *Diary and Correspondence*, Chetham Society, 1847-86, vol. i and vol. ii, pt. i.

to have pursued this interest after 1661, and Hartlib completely disappeared from public notice.

Goodman wrote that children should be given a practical education to fit them for service in church and state, and to provide recreation which could take the place of gambling and drink. He said nothing, however, about schools.¹ Similarly, Samuel Slater, a dissenting preacher, recommended at one of the morning exercises that children should have an 'ingenious and liberal education'; but he did not define what he meant nor say where such an education could be procured.² An attack on the narrowness of the grammar school curriculum was made by Eachard at the beginning of his *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy*. Latin and Greek are necessary, he admitted, but it is more important to understand and criticize the thought than to construe the grammar. Furthermore, other sciences are more useful and pleasant, and all men should certainly be able to use the English language as well as Latin.

Little mention was made of natural science and empirical methods as necessary for secondary education. In fact, Thomas Sprat, defending the Royal Society, and the experimental method, denied that these would effect a great change in the technique of education. It may be asked, he said, 'whether so great a change in works, and opinions, may not have some fatal consequence on all the former methods of teaching, which have been long settled and approv'd by custom. And here many good men of severe and ancient manners may seem to have reason when they urge against us that the courses of training up youth ought to be still the same; that if they be subverted or multiply'd, much confusion will follow; and that this our universal inquiry into things hitherto unquestion'd can never be made without disturbing such establish'd rules of discipline and instruction.' The answer is that the Royal Society, in particular, has only to do with adults who have no influence on the training of young students; and in general, grammar, rhetoric, mathematics, and logic will not be affected, nor will moral and political

¹ *The Old Religion Demonstrated*, pp. 277-8.

² *Sermon XV in Morning Exercises*, iv. 524; similarly Shaw, Samuel, *The True Christians Test*, pt. ii, Meditation XIII (1682).

philosophy. The only science which will need reforming is natural philosophy. Otherwise, schools and universities will not be disturbed.

Nevertheless, Sprat was to some extent lulling the suspicions of powerful adversaries by soft words: professional teachers could not be attacked without danger. He continued, 'But now after I have shewn that all the receiv'd forms of education will be safe, I shall make no scruple to add my conjecture that it could be no hindrance to the minds of men, if besides those courses of studies now follow'd, there were also trial made of some other more practical ways to prepare their minds for the world and the businesses of human life.' Would it not be at least as good to teach children by sight and touch the nature of 'sensible things' as to require them to learn or memorize universal precepts? From this, the historian leads on to a general defence of empiricism, technology, and natural science, as the best method and subject of education.¹

After 1660, nonconformist divines also said little about liberalizing grammar school education. They were more interested in ensuring that religion and education were not separated. They wanted godly schools and godly masters.² Samuel Shaw wrote text-books for grammar schools with the aim of teaching morals as well as grammar and rhetoric. Baxter urged that schoolmasters make use of his *Catechizing of Families*, and thought it a disgrace that children were catechized only one or two hours each week and spent the rest of their time studying Lyly, and Latin authors. They ought to read the Bible in the original tongues, for they must not 'be fooled by Cartesius, Gassendus, or Hobs' before they have studied the cross of Jesus Christ.

In the *Christian Directory* he advised students under the age of twenty to study exclusively languages, logic, mathematics, history, and the ancient poets, orators, and philosophers. Distrustful of any subject which young people could not easily relate to divinity, he objected to the study of physics unless it was combined with the study of spirits as real entities. The great curse, he wrote, of a carnal habit of

¹ *The History of the Royal Society*, pp. 323 ff. (1667).

² Lee, Samuel, *Sermon VIII in Morning Exercises*, i. 160.

mind was the failure to relate all to God. Common sciences and history were evil if read for curiosity, delight, and mental exercise rather than for religious purposes. Although he was not hostile to natural science and the humanities, Baxter probably thought them unsuited to young minds not yet trained to do all with an eye to salvation: he thought highly of Comenius and Dury, but he never recommended their educational treatises;¹ apparently he regarded higher learning as a good, but dangerous, pursuit, best reserved for specialists.

Religious leaders did emphasize the need for the type of education provided by the reading and charity schools. For the purposes of religion and the production of wealth, such training was necessary and good. Charitable people were urged to provide funds, and in practice these schools continued to increase in number. Whatever was accomplished in the direction of reducing illiteracy and ignorance, of preparing the masses of the people to take their place in a rapidly changing and increasingly competitive economic society, owes something to the stimulus of divines of all denominations.

But on the specific issue of a realistic and liberal secondary education for all men, or even for the middle ranks, religious leaders had little to say. In their writings they showed little interest in the kind of educational reform which had been advocated, and to some extent tried out, under the Commonwealth. The extraordinary activity and ferment of that period died down, or was suppressed. The endowments which the state might have used for extending free schools of all kinds were returned to the bishops and clergy or to the royalist landowners. More interested in suppressing the educational nurseries of dissent than in founding new schools, the cavaliers in Parliament passed the Act of Uniformity which made it necessary for teachers to procure an episcopal licence, and the Five Mile Act of 1665 which applied to schoolmasters as well as ministers. The Archbishop, Gilbert Sheldon, sent instructions to his bishops in 1665 to inquire

¹ *Catechising of Families*, pp. 5-7; *Christian Directory*, iv. 917-20; *Treatise of Self-Denial*, pp. 212-19, in *Works*, vol. xi. The reference to Comenius is *Christian Directory*, iv. 919, and to Dury, *Reliquiae*, i. 117.

into the political and religious opinions of every schoolmaster, and again in 1672 he enjoined the clergy to proceed against any who taught without licence. The laxity in policing schools was one of his chief regrets.¹ He was no doubt well satisfied when the Vicar of Rochdale, Lancashire, wrote that the dissenting schoolmaster, Zachary Taylor, had been turned out, although against the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants.²

Plainly, the Church of England, in conjunction with the government, was willing to sacrifice much of the progress which had been made by the Puritans, in order to stamp out dissent entirely. And the harm done was in fact extensive; some of the educational reformers, like Hezekiah Woodward, were also reformers in religion who suffered persecution after the Restoration.³ On the other hand, nonconformist leaders never directly attacked the Church on the grounds of the hurt done to education. Perhaps the provision of a humane and practical education for the middle classes seemed of small importance in the face of the religious problem. Besides, although they said little about the matter in their writings, nonconformist leaders were beginning to provide in the academies something very much like the liberal and utilitarian training which was needed. It was in these institutions, which flourished especially in the next century when the Universities dozed, that Defoe, Robert Harley, Joseph Butler, and many others received a sound training adapted to the needs of the times.⁴

Whatever might be done in practice, no one dared openly oppose giving a very large measure of education to every child. To deny the right to enlightenment was to lay oneself wide open to the charge of popery. That the Roman Church kept its power only by blinding men's reason, and

¹ Feiling, Keith, *History of the Tory Party*, p. 127.

² Add. MS. C. 304, 35a [Bodleian]; quoted in Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, pp. 479-80.

³ DeMontmorency, *State Intervention in English Education*, pp. 100-8; Parker, Irene, *Dissenting Academies in England*, pp. 34 ff., and ch. ii. Miss Parker is an ardent dissenter who blames the Church for more than the facts which she gives warrant. For Woodward see the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁴ Parker, Irene, *ibid.*; see also a slight lecture by Gordon, Alexander, *English Nonconformity and Education*, 1902. The best book on the academies is that by McLachlan, H., *English Education under the Test Acts*, 1931.

that the Reformation liberated men by educating them was a commonplace in the seventeenth century. Perhaps the best statement of it was in Stillingfleet's dialogue between a Catholic priest and a divine of the Church of England.

Roman Priest. . . . we observe it abroad, that in the best Catholick countreys, learning is in least esteem; as in Spain and Italy. . . . And therefore to deal freely with you, I am not at all pleased to see this eagerness of buying books among you. For as long as learning holds up we see little hopes of prevailing. . . ; since upon long experience we find ignorance and our devotion to agree as well as mother and daughter.

Protestant. . . . I think your observation is true enough. I have only one thing to add to it, which is, that it was not Luther or Zwinglius that contributed so much to the Reformation, as Erasmus, especially among us in England. For Erasmus was the man who awakened mens understandings and brought them from the friars divinity to a relish of general learning. . . .¹

David Clarkson attacked what he called the popish doctrine that ignorance was no bar to salvation, and cited the use of Latin liturgies as one of the devices used to enslave the people.²

Charles Morton, one of the ablest nonconformist teachers, brought in the issue of popery when his right to teach was questioned. The oath taken by graduates apparently forbade them to take part in rival universities or schools of higher learning such as the academies. Morton attempted, and successfully, to destroy this interpretation of the oath, using as one argument that it was in origin a papal device to confine and hamper the growth of knowledge. Moreover, he wanted to 'have knowledge increased, and not only confined to the clergy and learned professions, but extended or diffused as much as might be to the people in general'. But it is doubtful if he meant more by 'the people in general' than gentlemen and well-to-do men of business.

¹ *Several Conferences between a Romish Priest, a Fanatick-Chaplain, and a Divine of the Church of England*, in *Works*, vi. 38.

² *The Practical Divinity of the Papists*, pp. 47 ff.

³ *A Vindication*, printed in Calamy, Edward, *A Continuation of the Account of the ministers . . . ejected and silenced after the Restoration*, 1727, pp. 177-97; see McLachlan, *English Education under the Test Acts*, p. 77.

In the course of two debates between dissenters and Anglicans, the charge was made that the English Church opposed giving too much religious knowledge to the people. In one case the charge was denied and in the other it was hardly tenable. John Corbet, pleading for comprehension and toleration, said that the Puritans were sometimes accused of being inquisitive and disputatious. 'Yet these inquiring men stand much by that main principle of Protestantism, the judgement of discretion', and they will continue to do so so long as Englishmen read the Bible. Are we to think, he asked, that prelates and nobility fear a general diffusion of knowledge as a threat to their position?¹

Corbet was answered by a prebendary of St. Peter's, Westminster, Dr. Richard Perrinchief. To assert that 'prelacy dreads knowledge in the people' is a great slander, he wrote. Furthermore, Corbet makes the mistake of connecting learning with latitude: more liberty would increase ignorance rather than knowledge. The nobility, likewise, do not fear a knowing commonalty. But they do fear latitude which makes factions in religion, which destroys that 'respect and reverence given to persons of honour, as is due to them'.² Corbet did not repeat the accusation in his rejoinder.

Vincent Alsop, one of the ejected of 1662, and a master in the art of witty controversy, accused John Goodman of desiring to suppress learning among the common people. Goodman, Vicar of Watford, and later Archdeacon of Middlesex, had attributed religious divisions, in part, to 'popular rashness and injudiciousness'. This opinion, retorted Alsop, is libellous. Schoolboys are taught to be satirical when writing about the common people, who, according to the Orator, are altogether lacking in understanding and discrimination. But, Alsop continued, 'I admire how these men of wit and judgement would live, if the people whom they so undervalue as not worthy to wipe their shoes, did not moil and toil, and plow and sow, and spin, that they might lie at ease, arrayed like Solomon in all his glory'. It is true that the vulgar cannot judge of all the mysteries of state, but in reli-

¹ *A Discourse of the Religion of England*, pp. 26 ff., 43 ff. (1667).

² *A Discourse of Toleration in Answer to a late Book, intituled, A Discourse of the Religion of England*, pp. 53-8 (1668). Corbet replied in *A Second Discourse*.

gion they must be taught to understand, in order to 'a more humane, chearful, and rational obedience'. If most men are driven to religion like geese, the fact is to be lamented. They ought to judge and understand what they do.

Further, Goodman points out that the Roman Church avoids divisions by keeping all the people in ignorance. He adds, Alsop admitted, that this is an impossible policy in England because the people know too much already. Still, if the suppression of the rational laity were possible, would not Goodman be willing to try it? And may it not be possible in the future if not in the present?¹

Alsop was clever in debate, and he argued his point with skill. But his attack was not justified by what Goodman had said. The latter may have had less confidence in the educability of the masses than had Alsop. But he did not say so: he merely complained that the ignorance of the people had been a cause of religious faction—a fact which no Presbyterian such as Alsop could possibly deny, however much he might lament it. Moreover, Goodman did not simply observe that Catholic methods would not work in England; he went on to say that it was sinful to keep the laity in ignorance. A church in which the lay members had no understanding of what they were doing was, he wrote, more a symbol of hell than of heaven. He had concluded that the only way to heal religious divisions in England was by instruction, persuasion, and rational argument.²

Nevertheless, the tone of the *Serious and Compassionate Inquiry* was somewhat aristocratic, and the common people were treated somewhat cavalierly.³ Yet Goodman was probably right when he assumed that the mass of the population was ignorant, however Alsop might use it against him in debate; and until the educational system should be reorganized and expanded, learning would remain the privilege of

¹ *Melius Inquirendum, or a Sober Inquiry into the Reasonings of the Serious Inquiry wherein the Inquirers Cavils against the principles, his calumnies against the preachings and practises of the non-conformists are examined and reselled*, pp. 128–36, 165–8 (1678; 3rd ed. 1681).

² *A Serious and Compassionate Inquiry into the causes of the present neglect and contempt of the Protestant Religion and Church of England*, pp. 87–90, 103–4 (1674). Both books achieved a third edition.

³ Samuel Parker also spoke with contempt of the judgement of the 'rabble', *Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie*, 1671, *Preface*, pp. ix–x, xlii.

specialists and members of the upper classes. The reformers of the Commonwealth had complained against this exclusiveness and specialization. They had wanted to give the whole population a certain minimum,¹ and at the same time to adapt the method and subject of education to fit it for the uses and needs of all classes. But the attempted reforms were premature and were not effected. Consequently, men of the Restoration tended to accept the existing situation, and act on the assumption that knowledge was the privilege of the few.

Richard Steele warned tradesmen that educated persons were not fit for common occupations, a fact which parents must take into account when deciding on the future of their children.² Preaching to the University of Cambridge, Robert Nevile said that learning was either a wife or a mistress. Poor men must choose practical sciences to live with and get fortunes by, just as they choose a wife. But the wealthy should choose liberal sciences, like mistresses, for recreation and diversion.³

Zachary Mayne, a Fellow of Magdalen under the Commonwealth, and later a schoolmaster, thought that gentlemen were more likely to have the nobleness of mind needed for studying, although he added, 'God forbid I should think there are not rare sparks of vertue and ingenuity covered over with the rubbish of poverty. . . .'⁴

'An ingenuous and refined education', according to *The Gentleman's Calling*, is the peculiar advantage of the rich. Men's minds are naturally of the same clay; education is the potter which moulds them into vessels of honour or dishonour. Mean persons cannot afford such breeding, and in later life they have to spend all their efforts in getting a living, leaving their minds 'uncultivated and unapt for those more excellent productions which the happier institution of gentlemen enable them for; . . .'⁵ Since all men were equally

¹ Cf. Dell, William, *A Testimony from the Word against Divinity-Degrees in the University*, in the *Select Works*, 1773; and Winstanley, in Gooch, G. P., *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, 1927, pp. 189, 191.

² *The Trades-man's Calling*, ch. iii (1684).

³ *The Great Excellency, Usefulness, and Necessity of Humane Learning*, p. 8 (1681).

⁴ 'Two Letters', in *Gentlemen's Magazine*, pt. 1, pp. 11 ff., 1794 (1669).

⁵ pp. 12-13. The idea that men's intellectual abilities were equal, and that

educable, the author saw no injustice in the fact that the selection of scholars was made arbitrarily. This was equalitarianism with a vengeance.

Sharpening and exercising the mind was not only, however, the privilege of gentlemen: it was also their duty—one of the functions of the ruling classes. As leaders of society, men of leisure must be able to judge in religion and politics between false and true opinions; they must have minds sufficiently developed to control their passions so that they may act and rule in accordance with right. Their power over others makes it necessary that they know how to behave themselves in a judicious and reasonable manner. The understanding, will, and social behaviour having been formed by education, gentlemen will be able to perform the duties of their station.¹

The best way to rise above the common herd of men, wrote Isaac Barrow, is to acquire superior learning, and it is the business of a gentleman 'to cultivate his mind with knowledge, with generous dispositions, with all worthy accomplishments befitting his condition, and qualifying him for honourable action; so that he may excell and bear himself above the vulgar level no less in real inward worth, than in exterior garb; . . .'² God requires understanding from those who have the leisure to acquire it.³

Unfortunately, however, the gentry were very improperly educated. The advantages, complained the *Gentleman's Calling*, which are to be expected of a sound breeding, are notably absent. One cause of this, the writer continued, is that young men are sent too soon to the University and then whisked away for a foreign tour before they have learned anything. Travelling can be useful and instructive after the student is matured; but if undertaken too soon it erases all the good impressions made by the University. Too many gentlemen allow 'a piece of plate left to the school or college to be the only testimonials that ever they were there . . .';

superior powers were the result of education rather than heredity or Providence, was not uncommon. Cf. Barrow, Isaac, *Works*, i. 51, and Tillotson, *Sermon X* in *Morning Exercises*, i. 198-9. Tillotson quotes Descartes's *Discourse on Method*.

¹ *Gentleman's Calling*, 1667, pp. 19-27 (1st ed. 1660).

² *Of Industry*, 1700, pp. 163-4; 139-40.

³ Veal, Edward, *Sermon V* in *Morning Exercises*, ii. 5.

and too few are ever seen in the library except to read plays and romances.¹

Obadiah Walker, Fellow, and afterwards Master, of University College, and one of the men who followed James II into exile, was also interested in educating gentlemen in order that they might fulfil their public duties as magistrates and leaders of society. His book, *Of Education, Especially of Young Gentlemen* (1673), is a rambling and chatty collection of essays containing miscellaneous information on manners, the managing of servants, and the treatment of hotel clerks in foreign countries. He too put the main emphasis on religion and warned against sending young boys abroad without godly tutors, but he also included a general training in the sciences as part of the necessary education of a gentleman. The training on Aristotelian lines given in the Universities, he said, is admirably fitted to develop the mind of young leaders. But history, modern languages, and experiments in natural philosophy are equally useful, and no intellectual accomplishment, he insisted, is without value for a true scholar and gentleman. Walker's essay was popular and reached a sixth edition.

The most interesting treatise by a divine on the education of gentlemen was that of Gilbert Burnet, written about 1668.² Proper breeding, he said, is the most necessary duty of parents. Beginning at the age of four, a young gentleman should be taught English and religion from the Bible. For this purpose, he thought, a private teacher is best, because schools are run by mean people who teach little about morality.³

From the age of seven, well-chosen governors who are sufficiently read, but not pedants, should be employed. Religion is the most important thing to be learned, but gentlemen also need a liberal training. Latin is a good subject to study, but only for the purpose of being able to read: the study of grammar for itself, said Burnet, is a great waste of time. Greek and Hebrew, certainly French, and perhaps

¹ pp. 38-50, 97-8. Eachard, however, was quite willing to allow gentlemen who had no serious intentions of learning to adorn the University and become benefactors, *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy, Works*, 1773, i. 22 (1670).

² *Bishop Gilbert Burnet as Educationalist being his Thoughts on Education with notes and a life of the author*, by John Clarke, 1914.

³ Baxter also distrusted common schools, *Christian Directory*, ii. 546.

Italian and Spanish are also to be recommended, along with history and geography. From the age of fourteen natural science, with experiments, and the mathematics form a suitable curriculum for gentlemen. Logic, he said, is no longer necessary, except for pedants and sophists. Finally, no good can come from foreign travel unless the youth is to be an ambassador.¹

Forty years later, in writing the Conclusion to his *History*, Burnet returned to the subject of education. The commonalty, he wrote, were extremely ignorant in matters of religion, in spite of many pious books written for them. In this respect the dissenters had done more than the Church of England.

The gentry, he said, 'are for the most part the worst instructed, and the least knowing of any of their rank I ever went amongst'. They have neither religious nor secular knowledge. More than once the ignorance of the ruling class has brought England to the verge of ruin; gentlemen are not able to understand the dangers of popery and tyranny. Here Burnet repeated, in substance, his earlier prescriptions for a sound education, adding that gentlemen should study law and English history to learn the nature of English government, and ancient history to possess themselves of a zeal for liberty. For the nobility, too, he recommended a training in the sciences and arts, to free their minds and bring them to a hatred of tyranny. 'I have dwelt the longer on this article', he wrote, 'because on the forming the gentry well, the good government of the nation, both in and out of parliament, does so much depend'. And, 'I look on the education of the youth as the foundation of all that can be proposed for bettering the next age: it ought to be one of the chief cares of all governments, though there is nothing more universally neglected'. About the education of 'men of trade and business', however, Burnet had nothing to say.²

Along with the ruling classes the clergy were generally thought to have need for a large amount of learning. The

¹ Again, Baxter, *ibid.*

² *History of His Own Time*, vi. 193-207. The beginnings of a modern liberal education in the Renaissance owed much to the desires and needs of the nobility, courtiers, and men of affairs, and Restoration writers were carrying on in an old tradition when they spoke particularly of the education of gentlemen. Cf. Adamson,

Universities did afford an opportunity to a limited number of young men, mostly prospective divines, who fell below the class of gentlemen, providing they could get a little Latin beforehand. Scholarships helped them, as at the present, and there were ways of paying some part of the cost by working.

Two years before the return of King Charles, a group of divines, some of whom later conformed, subscribed to a proposal to aid poor students who wished to go to the Universities. The main purpose was to provide ministers of the gospel, although of the sixty students a small number were to study languages, history, natural philosophy, and the civil law.¹

After 1660 divines continued to recommend university scholarships as an especially rewarding form of charity, along with the founding of schools.² Baxter and his friends had sent the aptest children from Kidderminster to the Universities when he was preaching there,³ and he was also interested in the young college in America, named after John Harvard. He sent books to the library, and recorded the gift of £100 by his friend Alderman Ashurst.⁴ Another non-conformist divine, writing to Governor Leverett of Massachusetts, was sorry to hear that the college was not prospering, for 'if the colledge dye, the churches (some judge here) will not live long after it'. He gave news of money and materials which were being sent over by charitable men, and advised the Governor to keep in touch with Baxter, a true friend of the young foundation.⁵

Pioneers of Modern Education, Preface; and Watson, *The Beginnings of the Teaching of Modern Subjects*, 1909, Introduction and ch. ii.

¹ *A Model for the Maintaining of Students of choice abilities at the University*, 1658. The trustees included Calamy, Reynolds, Manton, Poole, and several more ministers. Matthew Poole and Baxter wrote prefaces, and the following divines were among those who recommended the plan: Seth Ward, Thomas Barlow, Cudworth, Whichcote, Worthington, and John Owen.

² Kidder, *Charity Directed*; Gouge, *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 225; Baxter, *Christian Directory*, iv. 191.

³ *Reliquiae*, i. 89.

⁴ Powicke, F. J., *The Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross*, 1927, pp. 48, 88; Baxter, *Faithful Souls Shall be with Christ*; Morison, S. E., *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, 1936, pp. 291, 439.

⁵ John Knowles, in *Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, vol. i, 3rd series, pp. 62, 65 (1675, 1677). For the connexions of English nonconformists with

Herbert Croft, Bishop of Hereford, and formerly a Catholic, thought that parochial ministers did not need a university education, since their principal duty was to preach of family and personal ethics.¹ But he was attacked by the Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, who called him a second William Dell, and pointed out that reason was necessary to establish those principles of religion which Christ was able to prove by miracles. Even He used syllogisms in argument, as in John viii. 47:

Who is of God hears God's words:

You do not hear;

You are not of God.²

Baxter distrusted the Universities as nurseries of debauchery, but he believed in the necessity of a learned clergy, trained in all the sciences.³

In general, divines of all groups, with the exception of one or two radical sects, were agreed that all branches of knowledge were lawful and helpful to religion.⁴ Occasionally non-conformists were accused of undervaluing human knowledge, but the charge was more than once rebutted.⁵ Theophilus Gale, a dissenting divine and tutor who left his library to

Harvard see Morison, S. E., *ibid.*, pp. 367-9, 383-7, 390 ff. Henry Ashurst and Knowles were members of a committee which appealed for money for Harvard shortly before the Restoration.

¹ *The Naked Truth or, the True State of the Primitive Church*, pp. 50-64 (1675).

² Turner, Francis, *Animadversions Upon a Late Pamphlet Entituled the Naked Truth*, pp. 52-60 (1676).

³ *The Catechising of Families*, Preface, p. 8, in *Works*, vol. xix; *Christian Directory*, iv. 923-9. Eachard's famous book attributed the contempt of the clergy, in part, to their ignorance, and advocated reforming the Universities to correct this defect.

⁴ For the development of Calvinist thought about secular learning see Professor Perry Miller's 'The Marrow of Puritan Divinity', *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts*, vol. xxxii, 1936.

⁵ e.g. Joseph Glanvill wrote that some nonconformists, at least, were opposed to the use of reason and 'humane learning', in the annex to *Philosophia Pia, or a Discourse of The Religious Temper and Tendencies of the Experimental Philosophy, which is Profest by the Royal Society. To which is annext a recommendation of reason in the affairs of religion* (1671). Robert Ferguson, one of the ejected ministers, surnamed 'The Plotter' because of his connexion with both Whig and Jacobite plots, replied to Glanvill, denying the charge, in *The Interest of Reason in Religion with the Import and Use of Scripture-metaphors* (1675).

Moreover, fifteen leading dissenting ministers including Baxter, Manton, Thomas Case, Matthew Sylvester, and William Bates issued a manifesto to prove that conformists and nonconformists were agreed on the matter: *The Judgment of Non-conformists of the interest of reason in matters of religion* (1676).

Harvard, made the ambitious attempt to justify human learning as being originally derived from the Bible.¹ Samuel Annesley preached that learning might not bring happiness, but that learned men are the best Christians, for they have better understanding, and can convince others.² Baxter had long before put forward 'Twenty considerations, evincing the necessity of common knowledge, called human understanding, notwithstanding the witness and helps of the Spirit'.³

For nonconformists and Anglicans alike, authority, whether of the Scriptures, of the Church, or of tradition, was losing ground. The attempt was being made to settle religion on a firm rational basis, and all kinds of learning were conscripted to help in the task. Atheists were to be refuted from their own principles.⁴ Shops and libraries were stocked with books which talked of the reasonableness of a natural Christian religion; the Universities were pressed to abandon scholastic methods and subjects, and to adopt a new methodology and curriculum for the work of criticism and discovery; and natural science was entering on its great period of triumph. In every field of learning divines were still among the leaders.

In conclusion, we may pause to remark on the connexion, noticed by divines, between economic production and the progress of experimental science. Robert Nevile, preaching in the University Church at Cambridge, observed that knowledge was necessary for prosperity. The wealth of a nation, he said, is built on two pillars, trade and war. And learning is essential to both: the study of navigation, geography, mechanics, and those sciences used in the art of war are justified by their usefulness.⁵

¹ *The Court of the Gentiles: or a Discourse touching the original of humane literature both philologie and philosophie from the Scriptures and Jewish Church* (1671-7).

² *Sermon I in Morning Exercises*, iii. 14-15.

³ *The Unreasonableness of Infidelity, Works*, xx. 183-98 (1655). For the general attitude toward learning on the part of the clergy see the following works: Hunt, J., *Religious Thought in England from the Reformation*, vols. i and ii; Tulloch, J., *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England in the Seventeenth Century*; Overton, J. H., *Life in the English Church, 1660-1714*, 1885; the article, already referred to above, by Perry Miller; Griffiths, Olive, *Religion and Learning*, esp. ch. iii.

⁴ Patrick, Simon, *Account of the New Sect of Latitude-Men* (1662).

⁵ *The Great Excellency, Usefulness, and Necessity of Humane Learning*, p. 27.

Similarly, Joseph Glanvill, the Rector of Bath, who was closely connected with the Royal Society and the Cambridge rationalists, defended the empirical method because of its usefulness. He remarked on the practical value of the new discoveries in navigation, geography, and technology, all of which led to increased commerce and increased wealth. In the same way, gunpowder and armaments had been valuable. Imperialism and the propagation of the Gospel went hand in hand; without mentioning trade, Glanvill pointed out that the West Indies could never have been captured and christianized without superior arms. Altogether, he said, the Royal Society alone, proceeding on Baconian principles, had done more valuable work than all the philosophers since Aristotle.¹

In fact, the Royal Society, which included a number of clergymen among its members, was very much interested in the practical economic effects of scientific study. Thomas Sprat, the future Bishop of Rochester, made good use of the economic argument in defending the Society against the critics who clung to tradition.

Christianity, he said, can never be opposed to that growth of the useful arts of life, which is the chief aim of the new philosophers. 'If our Church should be an enemy to commerce, intelligence, discovery, navigation, or any sort of mechanics, how could it be fit for the present genius of this nation?' Furthermore, it is not to be doubted that agriculture, industry, and transportation can be improved by experiment and observation. The discovery of new lands, careful observations in new countries such as America, and the study of technology and botany at home cannot fail to produce valuable results.

In the past, he continued, new means of producing wealth have been the result of chance, or of pressing necessity. But by establishing experiments on general principles, material progress may be increased beyond all imagination; and thus the dominion over the world, which God gave to man, may be managed by reason. The very dignity of human nature requires that men control the world rationally, instead of

¹ *Philosophia Pia*, ch. viii; *Plus Ultra: or the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the Days of Aristotle*, chs. vi, vii, xi, xii (1668).

being forever driven by chance and necessity. Philosophy itself will only then attain to perfection, when philosophers have mechanical heads, founding their knowledge on the certainty of experience, and applying it to useful purposes for the relief of man's estate.¹

The subject of education has led us far away from the original discussion, children in the family. But the root ideas about education are not unconnected with those about the family. Just as the family retained many of those patriarchal forms which were adapted to the aristocratic social structure, forms which were strengthened by the economic unity of the family, and inheritance—we may suppose that divines would have opposed modern death duties as destructive of the function of the family in preserving the social hierarchy—just so did the ideas about education bear the hall-mark of an aristocratic society. Higher learning was regarded as the privilege and province of gentlemen, together with a professional class, the clergy. The State and the Church needed educated magistrates and ministers; the ruling classes were impressed with the duty of providing themselves with knowledge, and the Church made some provision in the Universities for training a clergy drawn from all classes of the population.

But little effort or thought was expended in providing a broad intellectual discipline for the rest of the population. For the great majority of the people, it was tacitly assumed, learning is unnecessary. Except for certain special classes, worldly knowledge was vain, as Robert South said. What difference does it make to the ordinary man, whether he has free will or not, whether he is born with innate ideas or with a mind like a *tabula rasa*, or how the sun and earth move? In any case, believers are saved, and common men act in the same way.² So an aristocratic theory of education was justified with reference to religion and the needs of the social order, just as the patriarchal family had been.

But at the same time, a reformed Protestant religion, and a system of economic production in the process of being

¹ *History of the Royal Society*, pp. 342, 368-9, 371-2, 378-97.

² *Sermon IX in Works*, vol. ix.

reformed, demanded that the lower classes also be given facilities for a certain minimum of education. Consequently, divines advocated that elementary schools and technical training be provided. They regarded as good and necessary universal education in reading, writing, arithmetic, and the technical knowledge necessary for economic production.

A small group of clergymen were also interested in the progress of empirical science in the study of the material world; some of them, at least, were aware of the connexion between this kind of knowledge and the economic system. They defended the 'new learning' both as an aid to rational religion, and as a tool for the production of material wealth.

The emphasis on universal education, and the application of science to production, was a sign pointing toward the dissolution of the aristocratic social order, just as was the emphasis on the virtue of love and the more equal status of women. For as the latter foreshadowed the eventual destruction of the patriarchal family in the face of the bourgeois ideal, so the former tended to break down the aristocratic educational system. The ability of large numbers of people to read and write meant that learning could not remain the privilege of a small class. An increasing number of men, neither divines nor gentlemen, could and did take advantage of the opportunity to read and digest the many books which were now being written in English for their benefit. Gradually, curricula were changed to suit the needs of these new scholars. Technical training and the scientific development of production put new wealth into the hands of the citizens, and were an evidence of the increasingly bourgeois character of English society.

III MASTER AND SERVANT

HHEAD, rib, and loins were the chief parts of the family organism. But scarcely less important than husband, wife, and children were the servants who made up the feet. Clergymen agreed that the Fifth Commandment, since it was concerned with the problem of authority in the family, was meant to include the relation of servants and masters. Rightly considered, the mutual rights and duties of employer and employee were as natural as those of father and children, and the two were not unlike in many respects. Consequently, the usual exposition of family duties, based on the authority of the Decalogue, almost invariably included a section about servants.

The teaching which dealt with the duties and rights of the humblest members of the family group was particularly important, owing to the fact that these people were thought to be the only wage-earners. In fact, servants who were members of their masters' families, or worked under the personal direction of their employers, did make up the majority of wage-labourers. Moreover, domestic workers, apprentices, journeymen, farm labourers (much the largest group), clerks, and shop assistants, were all called servants,¹ and often lived as members of the employer's family. Divines, in particular, were likely to mean any or all of these groups when they spoke of servants, because from a religious point of view the similarities were more important than the differences: all servants could be disciplined in all their activities by masters armed with the authority of fathers.

The special duty of masters in respect to their apprentices was to teach them the trade. No secrets should be concealed for fear that the pupil might some day become a competitor. Too many boys, it was complained, learn little more than how to mind their master's children. God, wrote Swinnock, does not want an apprentice to become a journeyman at the

¹ Tawney, A. J., and R. H., 'An Occupational Census of the Seventeenth Century', p. 39, in *Economic History Review*, vol. v, no. 1, 1934.

end of his time for lack of knowledge about his trade, although this is all too common in the city.¹

Naturally, all servants ought to be decently fed and clothed. Apprentices should be maintained according to their station: a merchant, for example, ought to keep his apprentice in better style than his serving-man.²

If masters, furthermore, take care of their horses when they are sick, they are certainly bound to nurse and provide medical care for their servants. And when they grow old, employees should not be turned off as unfit, but should be given light work or, perhaps, pensions.³

On the subject of wages, divines appear to have thought it unnecessary to enter into a detailed discussion. Every one was ready to demand that servants be paid their wages and paid promptly. According to Baxter, 'It is so odious an oppression and injustice to defraud a servant or labourer of his wages (yea or to give him less than he deserveth) that methinks I should not need to speak much against it among Christians. Read Jam. 5: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and I hope it will be enough.' Other divines agreed;⁴ detaining the labourer's wages was an old sin.

But how much should be paid was not a question which ministers tried to answer—Baxter mentioned the problem only parenthetically. If masters provided, and were bound to provide, food, shelter, and medical care, we may infer that they were bound to pay wages sufficient to cover other necessities of a servant's station. But there seemed to be very few rules to guide a master in this matter. Only one or two men so much as mentioned 'low wages'.⁵

¹ *The Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, p. 121; Janeway, James, *Sermon XVIII in Morning Exercises*, ii. 371; Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Fifth Commandment, pt. x.

² Towerson, *ibid.*; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xii; Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xxviii, in *Works* (1664); Steele, *The Trades-man's Calling*, ch. v, sect. 3.

³ Watson, Thomas (d. 1686), *A Body of Practical Divinity*, pp. 349 ff. (1692); Calamy, Edmund, *A Patterne for All* (1658); Conant, John, *Sermon I in Sermons Preach'd on Several Occasions*, 1693-1722, v. 22-4; Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xxviii.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, ii. 556; Gouge, *ibid.*; Cradock, *ibid.*, pt. ii, ch. xii; Steele, *The Trades-man's Calling*, ch. v, sect. 3; Barrow, Isaac, *Exposition of the Decalogue*, in *Works*, vii. 494; *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 245.

⁵ Conant, *ibid.*, p. 250; Bury, Edward, *The Husbandmans Companion*, p. 288.

A few religious leaders, it is true, spoke of a 'just wage' and of what the labourer 'deserved'. But not a single one attempted to define what was meant by these phrases, although some divines did try to elaborate a similar idea, that of the just price. The size of a worker's wages failed to interest them.¹

A number of religious leaders, however, did try to decide the question with reference to a theory of free contract. According to Towerson, the work of a labourer, and his reward, are usually stipulated in an agreement; and it is a 'known and undoubted maxim that there can be no injury there where that which is exacted is with the free consent of him that is to pay it'. Consequently, he admonished masters to honour their contracts in the matter of wages. Baxter and others repeated that wages should be what was promised. Richard Allestree, Provost of Eton, thought that it was covetous for servants to demand more than they had contracted for at the start. He quoted from the twentieth chapter of St. Matthew to prove that employers might pay what they wished, without regard to any relation between service and wages, so long as labourers agreed beforehand as to what their pay should be.² That the passage referred to was part of a parable did not, in his opinion, invalidate the authority of its literal meaning.

Obadiah Walker wrote that since the abolition of slavery, service was merely a contract for mutual advantage; and 'to demand or imagine that a servant should quit his own interest, profit, and advantage to procure his masters is a folly whereof no considering man will be guilty'. Consequently, a wise master will pay enough to prevent his servants from being tempted to steal. At the same time, he will start a good servant at low wages, raising them whenever the servant threatens to leave.³ But Walker was dealing with the prac-

¹ Swinnock, *Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, ch. vi; Bunyan, *Christian Behaviour*, in *Works*, ii. 560; Doolittle, Thomas, *The Young Man's Instructor, and the Old Man's Remembrancer; or Controversies and Practical Truths fitted to the capacity of children and the more ignorant sort of people*, Fifth Commandment (1673).

² Towerson, *Explication*, Fifth Commandment, pt. x; Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 556; *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 338; Allestree, *Sermon XLIX in Forty Sermons*, p. 285.

³ *Of Education. Especially for Young Gentlemen*, 1673, pp. 283-6.

tical problem for young gentlemen, and not with moral considerations.

On the whole, divines were much more interested in the religious disciplining and education of working men than in the economics of wages and employment. When preaching on the former subjects, ministers of God were explicit and eloquent.

The power of the master over the servant was as solidly founded in Scripture, and in the law of nature which provided for order and government in the social order, as was the power of the father over the child. Likewise masters were obliged to cherish and use that power as a talent. All the reasons adduced to establish the rights and obligations of paternal rule were used again to bolster the authority of masters over their servants. In fact, expositions of the duties of father and of master usually followed one another, as they did in the *Christian Directory*. There was no doubt that employers were responsible for all the actions of their servants.¹ According to Thomas Lye, some foolish and deluded masters questioned whether they ought to force their servants to lead a godly life. Dared they interfere with liberty of conscience? Such a question, answered Lye, is a trick of the devil to undo the world.² Within his own family the master rules as a king.

The formal religious instruction of servants followed the same lines as that of wife and children. In practice the pious father often brought the whole family together at one time. But whatever the method, servants were to be catechized, examined in the Scriptures, and instructed from the family books provided for that purpose.³ Tillotson alone suggested that servants as well as children be taught to read, though no doubt other ministers would have approved. Daily religious instruction, at the least, was thought to be a necessity, and servants were to be given no peace until converted.⁴

¹ Mayo, Richard, *A Present for Servants, from their Ministers, Masters, or other Friends, especially in Country Parishes*, pp. 1-2 (1693); Bell, William, *Joshua's Resolution to Serve God with his Family Recommended*, p. 15 (1672).

² Lye, Thomas, *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, ii. 116.

³ Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xxviii (1664); Bunyan, *Christian Behaviour*, p. 559.

⁴ *Sermon* preached at St. Lawrence Jewry, 13 July 1684, in *Works*, vol. iii; Janeway, James, *Sermon XVIII in Morning Exercises*, ii. 370.

Employers were bound to set their labourers a good example, and to discipline them. They should forbid servants to spend time in ale-houses or in bad company, and to commit any of the common offences against piety. They have the power to punish disobedient employees, by whipping if necessary.¹ As members of the family, servants were under the régime of their masters at all times, and all their actions were subject to scrutiny.

To maintain their authority masters should avoid being either too familiar or too harsh. Both these extremes, in Baxter's opinion, were common faults, but the former especially was the cause of disorder in many families.²

Another common fault on the part of masters, bad both for business and morals, was to allow their servants to be idle and lazy. 'Idleness', wrote Baxter, 'is no small sin itself, and it breedeth and cherisheth many others: their time is lost by it and they are made unfit for any honest employment or course of life. . . .' In particular, gentlemen who maintain large retinues of serving-men seldom find enough for them to do. A well-governed servant should never have an idle moment.³

Nevertheless, divines recognized clearly that overwork was the lot of a large number of labourers: most masters were willing enough to chastize lazy employees, and to give them more than enough to do. Ministers of God said more about overworking than about permitting idleness. 'Just labour', according to Bunyan, was as important as just wages. A master who drives an apprentice beyond his strength, and allows him no time to learn of God, destroys a soul, said Mr. Wiseman.⁴

Baxter, too, was not unmindful of the health and salvation of servants. Work makes the body sound, he wrote, but wet feet may cause death. 'And should a man's life be cast away

¹ Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii. 556-7; *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 338-41; Swinnoek, *Christian-mans Calling*, pt. i, ch. xxvii; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xii.

² *Christian Directory*, ii. 556; Swinnoek, *Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, p. 110.

³ Baxter, *ibid.*; *Poor Man's Family Book*, in *Works*, vol. xix; Swinnoek, *ibid.*, pt. i, ch. xxvii; *The Gentleman's Calling*, p. 114.

⁴ *Christian Behaviour*, p. 560. In the *Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, Bunyan stated all the usual rules for dealing with apprentices and servants; Everyman edition, pp. 173-6, 181-2.

for your commodity?' Labourers who are driven too hard come to church like blocks, fitter to sleep than to hear the Word. A Christian master must allow his servants time for the worship of God.¹

Ungodly servants, it was observed, were certainly bad servants from a practical point of view. They tended to be lazy, and often went so far as to steal from their masters. Bunyan, speaking through Mr. Wiseman, related the story of a young woman who came to him in prison and confessed that she had taken money from the cash-box in her master's shop. When he tried to persuade her to confess her sin, she went away in fear and was never heard of again. Mr. Badman himself was an eminent example of the impracticability of keeping impious employees. Baxter had listened to the confessions of more than one newly converted labourer who had stolen from his employer.²

Besides stealing, the ungodly who worked only for money were likely to render eye-service, that is, to work only when the master was looking. 'Whereas a truly godly servant will do all your service in obedience to God, as if God himself had bid him do it, and as one that is always in the presence of that Master. . . . He is moved more to his duty by the reward which God hath promised him, than by the wages which he expecteth from you.'³ Experience proved that converted persons made the best servants, and that there was no better way to prosper in the world than by teaching employees their duties according to the Word of God.⁴ Bunyan pointed out that godly servants would work at lower wages in return for the privilege of having more godly masters; but he added that godly masters would not take advantage of this.⁵

For servants, the three great duties as Bunyan summed them up were: one, to be just, faithful, and obedient; two, to

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 556; likewise, Janeway, *Sermon XVIII in Morning Exercises*, ii. 366; *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 340-1.

² *Christian Directory*, ii. 490.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Towerson, *Explication*, Fifth Commandment, pt. x; Goodman, *The Old Religion Demonstrated*, pp. 249 ff.; Stockton, Owen, *A Treatise of Family Instruction*, p. 68; Gouge, *The Christian Householder*, p. 326, in *Works* (1663); *The Gentleman's Calling*, p. 121; *The Ladies Calling*, p. 224.

⁵ *Christian Behaviour*, p. 560.

work for God and not for man; and three, to be content. It was sinful, of course, to steal or cheat. Baxter was of the opinion that the sinful pilfering of apprentices should be reckoned as one of the causes of the Great Fire. The duty of faithfulness required the servant to make use of every opportunity and means to increase the estate of his master. His time belongs to his master, for whom he should work the whole day long. Wasting time is not distinguishable from stealing money, and eye-service is punishable by God though it may deceive earthly employers.¹

Servants, also, should be respectful and obedient at all times. The fact that a master happens to be a Christian affords the employee no excuse, wrote Bunyan, for being familiar. He should remember his place as the humblest member of the family.² Too many servants, added Towerson, think they need obey their masters about the special task for which they are hired, but are free to refuse in other matters. They mistake their work for a profession, when it is a service.

All labourers are bound to respect the rebukes of their employers as helps to a godly life. Particularly, they must bear the censures which are unjust; turning the other cheek is one of the greatest of Christian virtues.³ As it is the right and duty of masters to discipline and regulate all the actions of their servants' lives, so it is the duty of servants to obey, and to submit in silence to unjust commands in order that authority may be upheld. 'Servants obey your masters', Col. iii. 22. The earth cannot bear 'a servant when he reigneth', Prov. xxx. 22.

But that which is done by order and direction of the master is not done for him. For ultimately, all work should be done for God; and God is an exacting master. He demands diligence, long hours, prudence, and faithfulness. An ungodly servant may be careless when his master's back is

¹ Baxter, pp. 52-3 of a lecture for merchants at Pinners Hall, 2 September, 1679, in manuscript *Treatises*, iv. 281-315 [Dr. Williams's Library]; *Christian Directory*, pt. ii, ch. xiv; Steele, *Trades-man's Calling*, ch. v, sect. 2; Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xxix; Clarkson, *The Practical Divinity of the Papists*, in *Works*, iii. 160.

² *Christian Behaviour*, p. 565.

³ Towerson, *Explication*, Fifth Commandment, pt. x; *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 337-8; Gouge, *ibid*.

turned, but the eyes of God are everywhere. In another life He punishes men for eye-service, and rewards those who worked for Him, faithfully obeying their earthly masters as deputies of the deity.¹ In their insistence on working for God, divines were applying the common Protestant theories of sanctifying and infusing with grace all the ordinary tasks of secular life.

The third great duty of servants was that of being contented with their condition. God himself, in founding families, had given servants the lowest rank and given masters authority over them. To be rebellious or discontented was disobedience to God; it was a sin of pride and covetousness. Some men were to rule and some to serve, just as some were to be rich and others to be poor. Such is the will of God.²

Moreover, as Baxter pointed out, divine Providence not only allotted servants their station, but showered mercies upon them. For a servant has not the cares of paying rents, of finding wages for employees, of providing for wife and children, and of running the hazards of fortune which lie in the path of the employing class. 'Be thankful to God, who for a little bodily labour, doth free you from the burden of all these cares.' A good servant, knowing that his reward will come from the Lord, is much more zealous in performing his work well than in scrutinizing the treatment he receives from his master.³

Of course, if a particular job is for any reason, such as consideration of health, intolerable, a labourer is free to find a new place. But the principal consideration is religious: a godly master who has a pious family and who lives in the parish of a holy religious teacher. Any worker with such advantages ought not to change his place merely in order to get lighter work, better wages, or more luxurious accommodation. To change for such motives is to gratify the flesh and be damned.⁴ Any man who lives in a holy family and

¹ Lukin, Henry, *The Chief Interest of Man, or a Discourse of Religion*, 3rd ed., 1718, sect. xii (1665); Bunyan, *Christian Behaviour*, p. 565; Towerson, *Explication*, Fifth Commandment, pt. x; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xii.

² Janeway, *Sermon XVIII in Morning Exercises*, ii. 358-61, 377-82; Bunyan, *ibid.*, pp. 566-8.

³ *Christian Directory*, ii. 554-5.

⁴ *Ibid.* ii. 491-2.

has sufficient to keep himself in health ought to be fully content.

The teaching as to the duties of employees was aptly, if not grammatically, summarized by Simon Patrick, later the Bishop of Ely, in his advice to those about to take communion.

‘Let poor servants, for instance, examine whether they order themselves more lowly and reverently to all their betters; and be careful to be just and faithful; to govern their tongues also, and abstain from evil speaking as well as stealing, etc. And more especially, whether they grow more contented in that state and condition of life into which God hath been pleased to call them. These are substantial signs of growing better, by which you make a true judgement of yourselves. . . .’¹

Slave-owning was not one of the most pressing practical problems for English religious leaders, and very few of them said anything about it. Indeed, Obadiah Walker seems to have thought that slavery had been abolished in Christendom.²

Gabriel Towerson, however, included under the Fifth Commandment a discussion of servants who were slaves by reason of conquest or judicial sentence. Prisoners of war, by the law of nations, are liable to capital punishment. If they are saved alive, he wrote, nothing is more reasonable than that they should show their gratitude by perpetual service. Similarly, criminals, who might otherwise have been sentenced to death, should deem it a mercy to be condemned to slavery. That such slaves owe complete honour and obedience to their masters no one can doubt.

This kind of servitude, he went on to say, has been much less usual since the introduction of Christianity, although ‘I think so general an abolition of it was neither founded upon any just reason, nor hath prov’d much for the conveniency of the world’. Poor men, especially, do not know how to govern themselves, and many persons are ‘not unlike to certain beasts’. ‘Which suppos’d, what can be more reasonable, where a just cause precedes, than the introducing of such a servitude as we speak of, as by means of which, the master

¹ *A Book for Beginners, in Works*, 1858, i. 614 (1679).

² *Of Education*, p. 283.

may live by the servants labour, and the servant, on the other side, not only be maintain'd by it, but be restrain'd from those exorbitances, to which either his ignorance or the pravity of his nature may incline him?'

Furthermore, conquerors in war, and judges, could be more merciful if they were able to condemn men to slavery. Justice, too, would be served, because slavery would be a more terrible punishment than the gallows, and consequently a greater deterrent. Apparently, Towerson was trying to eat his cake and have it too. But his intention is clear.

The duty of slave-owners was performed by furnishing adequate food and clothing, requiring work suitable to the physical strength of the slave, and by fitting the punishment to the crime.¹ It is noteworthy that Towerson said nothing of the religious education which was so important for servants by contract. If he had been pressed on the point, we can only suppose that he would have recommended it as an obvious duty. Still, the fact that he did not specifically mention it in regard to slaves, allows us to suspect that he was more concerned with disciplining the action of workers than with saving their souls.

His approval of slavery, however, does not indicate that he regarded African slave-traders as moral men. Slaves, he said, could only be made so, 'where a just cause precedes', and that certainly did not include raids on the West Coast. Still, he did not explicitly condemn the slave traffic.

Baxter agreed that no man was to be made a slave without just cause, such as war or judicial sentence. He added that poor men could sell themselves for money, but this voluntary slavery should be strictly limited by considerations of the general good of the commonwealth. 'To go as pirates and catch up poor negro's or people of another land, that never forfeited life or liberty, and to make them slaves and sell them, is one of the worst kinds of thievery in the world; and such persons are to be taken for the common enemies of mankind. . . .' They are 'incarnate devils'. A Christian who buys men enslaved by this sinful method can have no alternative to freeing them at once.

Furthermore, all men are by nature equal and free at

¹ *Explication*, pp. 311-13.

birth. They have immortal souls which they cannot sell. Consequently, no man can be lawfully enslaved if his salvation is thereby endangered, or the service of God is injured. Masters may make a difference in the diet and clothing of slaves, and require more work from them than from ordinary servants. But everything possible must be done for the good of their souls: God is their absolute owner, while masters have only a 'derived and limited propriety'. Baxter's worst denunciations were spent on those wicked men of the West Indies, and the Spaniards in South America—men who murdered, not bodies, but immortal souls.

As an example of godly dealing he proposed the colonists of New England who enslaved no one, paid for the land which they colonized, and spent money and time converting the natives. And he recommended as a suitable charity native missionary work, mentioning the writings of 'Mr. Goodwin' about the sorry state of the negroes of Barbadoes.¹

On the whole, we may say that Baxter took a strong line against the worst aspects of the slavery of his day, though he did not condemn the institution in all its forms. A number of years after writing the *Christian Directory*, he answered the question of whether slavery was lawful by saying, 'It is a great mercy accidentally for those of Guinea, Brazil, and other lands, to be brought among Christians, though it be as slaves. . . .' Those who buy and sell them are usually sinners, but to buy them 'in compassion for their souls, as well as for their service, and then to sell them only to such as will use them charitably like men . . . preferring their salvation, is a lawful thing, especially such as sell themselves, or are sold as malefactors.'² We should be wrong in thinking that these few sentences betray a change in attitude. But they do show how easy it was to find some justification for slavery; Baxter came near to saying that a Christian may lawfully take part in a sinful traffic, providing his motives are good; in the *Christian Directory* he had forbidden Christians to buy stolen negroes, unless to free them.

The Mr. Goodwin to whom Baxter referred was probably the Rev. Morgan Godwin, a grandson of a former Bishop

¹ *Christian Directory*, pt. ii, ch. xiv; *How to Do Good to Many*, p. 329, in *Works*, vol. xv

² *Catechising of Families*, p. 210.

of Hereford, and himself a B.A. of Christ Church, Oxford. He travelled to the West Indies, became a minister in Virginia, and finally returned to England to plead the cause of the negroes and Indians.

He repeated, what were platitudes to religious ears, that all men have immortal souls, and ought to be brought to a knowledge of God. Denouncing those men in America who went so far as to say that negroes were not human, he reported that negroes and Indians were not being converted and baptized. Masters objected that, if Christianity spread, negroes would not work on Sunday, polygamy would be abolished, and the number of slaves eventually diminished, and ideas of equality and better provision would be put into the heads of the blacks, tempting them to rebel.

To this Godwin replied that a Christian ought to be ready to forgo some profit for the salvation of souls. Besides, religion would not make negroes rebellious or discontented, for Christianity 'establisheth the authority of masters over servants and slaves'.¹

Some years later, Godwin preached before King Charles in the Abbey; the published version of his sermon was dedicated to King James, who had ascended the throne in the meantime. In the Epistle he appealed to the King against those colonists who set up 'Trade and Commerce' before 'Christ and Religion'. The *Preface* contained some stories of cruelty. In Virginia, one slave was whipped to death for being baptized. In Java, the English refused to allow natives to become Christians, so they all turned Mohammedans. And everywhere masters were happy whenever a negro wench was got with child, no matter who the father was.

In England, even, slaves were refused the mercies of religion. A man of Bristol sent his negro to America because he had been baptized, and another master threatened a

¹ *The Negro's and Indian's Advocate suing for their admission into the Church; or, a Persuasive to the instructing of Negroes and Indians in our Plantations; shewing that as the Compliance therewith can prejudice no Mans just Interest, so the wilful neglecting and opposing of it is no less than a manifest apostacy from the Christian Faith. To which is added, A brief Account of Religion in Virginia* (1680), esp. pp. 112, 136-7. In the next year, Godwin published *A Supplement to the Negro's and Indian's Advocate; or Some further considerations and proposals for the effectual and speedy carrying on of the Negro's Christianity in our Plantations . . . without any prejudice to their owners.*

minister who wanted to baptize a slave. In every case the excuse was that religion would make these captive servants rebellious and crafty, although in fact no one held the theory that baptism made men free. The main principle, and a wicked one, was 'That whatever conduceth to the getting of mony and carrying on of trade must certainly be lawful'. Even white men have been kidnapped or decoyed from England in order to make them slaves.¹

Godwin, like Baxter, was concerned with the salvation of the souls of slaves. He said nothing at all against slavery itself, or against Christians buying kidnapped Africans: he affirmed that Christianity made negroes more obedient. The truth of his statement was soon recognized; the difficulty of admitting slaves as equals to the congregations of the righteous was solved by making separate folds for these black lambs of God.

Another class of persons who, though not wage-earners, were nevertheless under the control of economic masters, were the poorer tenant farmers. For well over a hundred years capitalist landlords had been raising rents to the utmost limit, and rack-renting was a bugbear of every social reformer.² Not all farmers, of course, suffered alike. Copyholders, and tenants who held by lease or at the will of the landlord, if they adopted the most efficient methods, were placed near a good market such as London, or spent part of their time in manufacture—for example, in the preparation of wool—were able to pay higher rents. But a large class of poor farmers could not meet the competition of improving landlords; they were gradually pushed on to poorer farms, and at the same time their rents were forced up by the rise in land values. They were, in other words, charged an economic rent or rack-rent, which kept them in perpetual poverty. This type of tenant farmer was increasing in numbers, as freeholders and copyholders tended to decline.³

¹ *Trade Preferred before Religion*, 1685. For Godwin see the *D.N.B.*

² Tawney, R. H., *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, 1926, ch. iii, sect. i; see also Tawney's *Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century*, 1912, and Johnson, A. H., *The Disappearance of the Small Landowner*, 1909.

³ See the admirable introduction by George Unwin to *The Reverend Richard Baxter's Last Treatise*, F. J. Powicke, ed., 1926.

Divines, however, had little to say in particular about poor farmers. These were included in many cases, no doubt, under the general title of the poor; some, perhaps, were included under the heading of servants. But only two or three persons spoke of poor tenants as distinct from other people in need. Of these persons, Richard Baxter had much the most important things to say.

His chief interest in tenants, of course, had to do with the salvation of their souls. As we have seen, he wanted landlords to furnish them with books, reading teachers, and opportunities for Christian worship. In a thoroughly paternal manner, he advocated that tenants be forced to read religious treatises by including a clause in their leases to that effect.¹ Landlords should use all their power to discipline the moral life of their farmers, even to putting out the ungodly. But the poverty of tenants, he recognized, was one of the greatest hindrances to their being godly; and from an interest in souls, he was led directly into economic problems. Racking rents, said the *Poor Man's Family Book*, reduces farmers to such misery that they have no time to think of God, or educate their children in the Christian religion.

The *Christian Directory* considered the ethics of rents under the title, 'Cases of Conscience about Oppression, especially of Tenants'. The main argument was that landlords have not the right to charge whatever rent they can get. Especially in England, where tenants are poor and owners are rich nobles and gentlemen, rents must be reduced to allow farmers a decent living and an opportunity to achieve their salvation. Unless the tenants agree, and no scandal or hardship arises, it is wrong to buy land from an easy-going landlord with the object of raising all the rents.² The *Christian Directory* also complained of gentlemanly hunters riding over poor men's corn.³

Baxter's chief writings about poor husbandmen are in a treatise which he finished two months before his death, and

¹ *Christian Directory*, iv. 191.

² Pt. iv, ch. xx. Professor Tawney discusses this chapter in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 223-5.

³ i. 461.

which was not published until the twentieth century. Perhaps his friends thought it too radical, as the modern editor suggests. Called *The Poor Husbandman's Advocate to Rich Racking Landlords*, it is one of the few important works of social criticism written by a divine of the period.

The first chapter described the matter of fact. Rack-rents, replacing the long leases which were formerly used, have reduced farmers to such poverty that their life is one of continual misery. For them, Christian knowledge and learning are impossible. Their own servants [i.e. farm hands] are better off since they have no families to support. Moreover, they have no money to spend for medical care: they hire quacks and die.

The importance of the case, continued Baxter, is great, for these men are very numerous, and are the people who feed England, as well as manning her armies and navies. Besides, when they are poor, there is no home market and merchants cannot sell their goods. Again, poverty makes them brutes like the peasants of France, Russia, and Poland—what honour can king and lords have in ruling beasts? The army and navy deteriorate, because the best warriors are those with a stake in the country. But the greatest evil is the lack of religion. Where poverty is least, religion is best. Ignorance is the prelude to popery, and landlords will be the sufferers if the Pope takes back the monastic and church lands.

Because they are sinful, poor farmers doubtless deserve to suffer. The sin of tenants, however, does not excuse oppressors who are driven on by the love of money and the desire to satisfy their lusts. Landowners have a wrong and atheistical notion of property. Though levellers are not to be tolerated, and though it is thievery to take what is another's without his consent, nevertheless, God is the only absolute owner and men are stewards holding what they have in trust for their fellows.

The remedy is to abate rents, even up to a third, and encourage farmers to learn of religion by giving them books, teachers, and personal instruction. Chapter V is a list of Scripture texts commanding charity and justice. Chapter VI is devoted to answering objections. For example, some men

complain that they pay the taxes and therefore need all the rent they can get. But, answered Baxter, 'Who should pay money but those that have it? and who should pay dearer for publike safety than they that have most to lose?' Even so, rich men have more left after they have paid their taxes than poor people ever have, and these latter defend the country with their bodies while the rich contribute only money. 'If any of the Great Generations goe to command them, it is too often those that have prodigally wasted their estates at home, and must have large pay for their desires.'

To improve the lot of the poor is not to stir up rebellion. On the contrary, oppression has always been the cause of revolt. 'There is no standing before the multitude if they be but armed with despair.' Therefore, 'use the people so well that they may feel that peace and obedience and the Kingdom's defense is their interest. . . . How miserable is that nation that is ridden by such fools as thinke they ride not well but on a tired horse, because a pampered horse may cast them. . . .'

Although he used the most persuasive arguments, seasoned with pitiless denunciation, Baxter still had little hope that his reforms would ever take place. 'The great dog will not be moved by argument or oratory to give up his bone or carrion, nor to let the little dogs partake with him.' Consequently, the last chapter of the treatise was directed to the poor farmers themselves, instructing them to reform in order that they might deserve better treatment, and schooling them in the virtues of contentment and resignation. The temptations to be avoided are 'uncharitable thoughts and speeches of your oppressours', and repining at God's providence. Religious duties must not be neglected, however difficult it may be to find time for them. Let poor farmers consider their many advantages: they are like Christ in their freedom from worldly encumbrances; they have no opportunity to be sinful idlers; and their simple food is more healthful than the luxurious delicacies of rich landlords. A wise farmer will not borrow money, run into debt unnecessarily, or make himself poorer by indiscretions and excesses. Finally, the promise of a future life may relieve much of the misery of this life. If 'the firme belief of Heavenly Glory possess

your soules, how comfortably may you suffer and live and dye'.¹

Baxter's treatise on the poor husbandman is the most important work of the period on that subject, and it is one of the great pamphlets of the seventeenth century. The plight of the poor tenant farmer, however, did not elicit the interest of many other divines. Samuel Shaw, school-teacher and nonconformist minister, did remark that landlords were tenants of a God who demanded that all His children should be given the means of existence. *The Gentleman's Calling* pointed out that landlords might easily persuade their tenants to live a godly life by making it a worldly advantage to them; but it only mentioned rents in passing.²

Richard Steele instructed tenants over and over again in the virtues of patience, and cheerful acquiescence in their condition. If there is little time for religion, he wrote, 'you must work harder and sleep the less that you may pray and read the more'. If landlords oppress, rents are heavy, and taxes high, no doubt the farmers will have many cares. 'No way in this world to avoid them; the way therefore is to get them sanctified and sweetened.' Discontent is rebellion against the will of God, and tenants who envy and hate their lords are wicked. Too many are of a levelling mind. 'Nay, if their humour were not curb'd by grace within, or fear without, they would actually dispossess their superiors of their right. . . .' Religion does not countenance revolt: landlords who oppress cannot be defended. We must tolerate them here, although we know that they will be punished in hell. In this world, the poor of the country-side ought to submit in patience. To be murmurers, or to seek relief in drunkenness, or by theft and fraud, only insures that a man's misery will be prolonged in a future world, and that he will deserve the troubles and sorrows of this life.³

Writing for the poor husbandmen, Steele said nothing to landlords about their duties. Indeed, Baxter was the only divine who spoke at length of the poverty of the country-

¹ *The Poor Man's Family Book*, pp. 421-3, also counsels farm tenants to strive for resignation.

² *The True Christians Test, or a Discovery of the Love and Lovers of the World*, pt. ii, Meditation XX; *The Gentleman's Calling*, pp. 111, 70.

³ *The Husbandmans Calling*, esp. chs. iv, v, and vii, and pp. 48, 52, 77-9.

side, although there can be no doubt that it was a pressing problem. Even so, his chief treatise was not published until the twentieth century.

Inclosures, which constituted another of the major problems connected with the ownership of the land, received as little attention from divines as did rents. Precisely how much land was enclosed in the seventeenth century is not known. The older view, represented by Professor Ashley, was that this period fell between the two high tides of the inclosure movement which came in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and again in the eighteenth.¹ This view, however, has not been borne out by later studies; inclosure probably went on continuously, and on a large scale, throughout the seventeenth century.²

There is some evidence, however, to show that the inclosures of this period were less detrimental to the interests of the poorer classes than those of earlier and later times. When arable land was enclosed for pasturing, families found themselves without homes or employment. If waste, however, was enclosed for growing corn, or pasture turned into arable, the effect was not disastrous. Some squatters might lose their meagre means of existence, as was the case when the fens were drained; and villagers might lose some of the independence which an interest in the common had given them, especially if the common was taken without compensation by the local lord. But more farm hands and more tenants would be needed to work the new arable, and consequently the suffering of labourers would be less. It is possible that the inclosures of the seventeenth century were mostly of this latter kind; at least, Stuart writers advocated the turning of pasture and waste into arable, and pointed out that it did not have the bad social consequences of previous inclosures.³

¹ *An Introduction to English Economic History and Theory*, 1898, pt. ii, p. 286.

² Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure*, 1912, pp. 175 ff.; Prothero, *English Farming, Past and Present*, 1927, p. 55; Leonard, E. M., 'The Inclosure of Common Fields in the Seventeenth Century', in *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, New Series*, xix. 101-46. Miss Leonard gives the authorities responsible for the opinion that there was little inclosure in the seventeenth century.

³ Prothero, *ibid.*, pp. 125-9; Gonner, *ibid.*, p. 185. Joseph Lee, a minister during the Interregnum, defended the fencing of pasture and waste for growing corn in *A Vindication of a Regulated Enclosure*, 1656. He pointed out that this kind of

The inclosure of open fields, if done justly, could be of benefit to all concerned.

We should not be surprised, then, if divines had less to say about depopulation and oppression than in Latimer's days: the social problems created by inclosures were probably less acute. Still, some hardship and poverty must have come from the landlords' new hedges.¹ Even if the villagers were paid for the land which the lord enclosed, the small capital sum must have soon been exhausted, and the security which attaches to the ownership of property lost. The subject was certainly still important enough to deserve some recognition from the pulpit. The historian of Nottinghamshire, Robert Thoroton, urged Sheldon to use the influence of the Church to prohibit the growing evil of depopulating inclosures.² State and Church, as well as poor farmers, he observed, were injured by hedges.

Preaching in Westminster Abbey, South complained of those men who put private interest before the public good. "Tis not the rain that waters the whole earth, but that which falls into his own cistern, that must relieve him; not the common, but the enclosure that must make him rich."³ South had nothing more to say about inclosure, but even this short statement is evidence that he had not fully accepted the new idea that public and private good always coincided. He had a dim feeling that the desire to possess completely, to control property without being hampered by the communal privileges of other men, was not wholly good. A similar relic of an older attitude is the traditional question which the Bishop of Chester, John Pearson, put to the clergy of his diocese. 'Have any inclosures been made in your parish to the detriment of the church, by the decay of tillage, and the converting of arable lands into pasture?'⁴ Personal offerings as well as persons were lacking in depopulated parishes.

enclosing need not harm any one. He did, however, favour private in place of common ownership of land, as a stimulus to the self-interest which he regarded as the foundation of public good. Cf. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 259.

¹ Gonner, *Common Land and Inclosure*, p. 395.

² Thoroton's letter, an interesting document for students of the inclosure movement, is to be printed in the *Transactions of the Thoroton Society* for 1939.

³ *Sermon IX in Sermons*, i. 328-9 (Westminster Abbey, April 30, 1676).

⁴ 'Articles of Inquiry within the Diocese of Chester', in *Minor Theologica Works*, 1844, i. cxxii.

If powerful men enclosed the lands of the poor without compensation, the act was plainly one of robbery. Samuel Shaw condemned such enclosing fervour,¹ and Baxter agreed, adding that depopulation was an argument against inclosure in countries where man power was lacking. But, continued the *Christian Directory*, where the poor are many, razing villages and tenants' houses may decrease the number of beggars by discouraging marriage. Also, if he encloses his land, the owner will have to increase the number of his servants, 'among whom he may keep up a better order, and more pious government in his own house (making it a Church) than can be expected in poor families: and his servants will (for soul and body) have a much better life than if they married and had families, and small tenements of their own. . . .'² Combining an economic argument with the moral consideration of the good of discipline and of a close personal relation between master and servant, Baxter could approve of some limited enclosing.

Thomas Fuller quoted without comment the Lincolnshire proverb, 'They held together as the men of Marham when they lost their common'.³ Of the County of Warwick, however, he recorded, 'In this shire the complaint of J. Rous continueth and increaseth, that sheep turn canibals, eating up men, houses, and towns, their pastures make such depopulation. But on the other side, it is pleaded for these incloasures, that they make houses the fewer in this country, and the more in the kingdome.' Corn, he continued, visibly employs men where it grows, while wool invisibly employs men many miles off. In order to make the change which increases wealth, and yet not cause distress to farmers, land should be enclosed gradually, giving labourers a chance to adapt themselves to the new situation.⁴ Fuller has the honour

¹ *The True Christians Test*, p. 297.

² Pt. iv, p. 142. Mentioned by Tawney in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 260.

³ *The History of the Worthies of England*, 'Lincolne-Shire, Proverbs' (1662); see also *The Holy and Profane State*, p. 143 (1642).

⁴ *Ibid.*, 'Warwickshire, Sheep'. John Rous (1411?-1491) was a priest and antiquary of Guy's Cliffe, near Warwick. For a list of his works see *D.N.B.*; also Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 138.

Fuller's statement may be compared with that of Ashley, *Introduction to English Economic History and Theory*, vol. I, pt. II, pp. 287, 301, who thought that there was no enclosing in Warwickshire in the seventeenth century.

of being the only clergyman to suggest a reasonable policy for mitigating the hardships involved in forcing agricultural labourers to become propertyless city proletarians. Unfortunately, he hid his suggestion in the pages of a folio which was not intended to be a practical moral guide for the directors of public policy.

Lastly, the two major historians of the Reformation referred in passing to the enclosing troubles under Edward VI. According to Peter Heylyn,

'Some Lords and gentlemen who were possessed of abbey lands had caused many inclosures to be made of the waste grounds in their several manors, which they conceived to be (as indeed it was) a great advantage to themselves and no less profitable to the kingdom. Onely some poor and indigent people were offended at it, in being thereby abridged of some liberty which before they had in raising to themselves some inconsiderable profit from the grounds enclosed.'

The Lord Protector, Somerset, desiring to gain the favour of the vulgar 'though to the prejudice of the Publick', ordered some of the lands to be laid open.¹ Heylyn evidently thought that inclosure benefited the nation, even though it occasioned some losses to mean people. There is here, perhaps, a trace of the belief that the propertyless poor were not in fact a part of the nation, nor their interest a part of the national interest.

On the other hand, Burnet, who looked upon Heylyn as a reactionary papist, and who himself sometimes spoke slightly of gentlemen, gave an account favourable to Somerset and the poor. Greedy landlords, he said, were unjustly depriving poor men of their means of support; the Lord Protector had reason to restrain them.²

The conclusion to be drawn from this evidence is that divines were unable or unwilling to attempt a solution of the problem of inclosure. In the first place, they avoided mentioning it, except for a few casual references. Secondly, they failed to define the problem accurately. Inclosure undoubtedly increased wealth and was thus far an admitted

¹ *The History of the Reformation of the Church of England*, p. 75 (1674).

² *The History of the Reformation*, 2nd ed., pt. ii, p. 114 (1681-3). Neither Heylyn nor Burnet quoted authorities for the different opinions about this incident. Speed and Stow are noncommittal; Holinshed, whom both men quoted elsewhere, sympathized with Somerset and the protestors.

good; but it also increased the inequalities in the distribution of wealth, an evil which was to be avoided. Heylyn apparently identified the increase in landlords' profits with an increase of national wealth, and held this to be a greater good than some 'inconsiderable profit' of the poor. This failure to recognize that the opposing interests of different classes make it difficult to speak of the national welfare or interest was, of course, a common error of mercantilist as well as of present-day social theory.¹ The interest of the rich is assumed to be the interest of the whole population, and consequently is the one to be protected. Influenced perhaps by this theory, clergymen could see few objections to inclosures. Baxter thought that labourers might even be better off, providing that they submitted to the personal supervision of masters and refrained from marrying. Fuller alone saw the problem realistically, although he apparently recognized no difference between semi-independent farmers and wage-earning workers. Divines no longer had a critical attitude to the social problem involved in enclosing: by their silence, or by their approval, they aided a movement which was in the interest of the governing classes.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of the religious teaching in regard to masters and servants is its patriarchal point of view. The assumption was that all employees were the lowest members of a family group, living in the intimacy of a personal relation with the other persons of the family. The father and master was bound to care for his servants, for their souls as well as their bodies, as if they were his adopted children, slightly below his own natural children in rank. Such was the status, not only of apprentices who were in fact often children, but of all labouring men who did not own their own implements of production and worked for some kind of employer. The master had the right to discipline the private lives of his servants exactly as if they were his own offspring. To doubt his right was evidence of satanic temptation. On the other hand, servants were bound to accept the authority of their employers. The whole relationship was a

¹ Heckscher, Eli, *Mercantilism*, 1936, p. 166; Furniss, E. S., *The Position of the Laborer in a System of Nationalism*, New York, 1920, pp. 8, 203.

personal one, based upon the assumption that employees were in fact members of the family, living under the same roof with the master's wife and children.

Baxter, at least, assumed that they would not be married—that was one of the advantages of their station. Inclosures could be justified if they increased the number of unmarried servants and brought them under the personal discipline of masters. Divines welcomed this intimate relationship between owner and worker as an opportunity created by God to establish order and religious discipline in a wicked world. Master and servant were accepted as integral parts of the patriarchal family which had been ordained by God and Nature for the good of human society.

The economic aspects of the relation between employer and employee, under such a system, were relatively simple. To begin with, such matters as wages were a minor consideration beside the problems of moral discipline and government. The servant received much of his pay in kind—often board and lodging. Religious leaders insisted that this reward should be adequate and fitted to the station and rank of the worker; otherwise he was free to seek a new place, though Baxter thought that employees should not change their jobs for financial reasons unless the accommodation given was actually unhealthful. Beyond these minimum requirements, the question of reward seemed unimportant. The chief rule was that agreements should be kept and payments made promptly, and on this divines insisted. Also, it was not difficult to determine that servants should be neither overworked nor underworked. Servants' duties were summed up in obedience, faithfulness, and contentedness. They were complementary to the duties of masters, and helped the economic system to run smoothly.

Within the limits of this paternal organization, religious leaders wanted to see justice done, and the good of society safeguarded. A spiritualized personal connexion, adequate maintenance, the keeping of agreements, even provision by the master for old servants and keeping them on in times when labour was too plentiful, though this last was recommended by only one or two ministers, were practical moral aims for masters in a society organized for production on a

patriarchal basis. On the other side, servants ought obviously to be obedient and faithful.

But clergymen were slow to see that these ideas were becoming impracticable. It was no doubt true that the majority of employers and employees were still organized on the paternal basis of master and servant. A new order of production, however, was growing up in which the personal relation was being replaced by a money connexion—wages. A factory system was being created which was to take the labourer out of his master's family and put him in his own quarters on the other side of the town. The journeymen of London who formed combinations to secure higher wages and shorter hours were no longer men who regarded themselves as members of their employers' households; their only relation with them was one of time and money.¹ As Marx wrote in the *Manifesto*, 'for exploitation veiled by religious and political illusions [the *bourgeoisie*] substituted naked, shameless, brutal exploitation.'

Religious leaders did not see the changes which were taking place, and consequently they had very little to say about wages, which had been much less important in the past. Instead, they clung to the traditional teachings about master and servant; and it cannot be denied that these counsels were still applicable to the society of the Restoration, although they were becoming more and more old-fashioned.²

Political arithmeticians, on the other hand, were very much concerned about wages. The consensus of opinion was that they were too high. Mercantilist theory taught that wages should be low to decrease the cost of production and enable England to compete in foreign markets. Furthermore, the poor should be prevented from idling, debauching themselves, and thus wasting the man power of the nation, by low wages which would make necessary perpetual labour in order to exist. Both moral and economic considerations proved the necessity of small pay rolls.³

¹ For the growth of the factory system see the excellent article, with bibliography, by J. U. Nef, in the *Economic History Review*, vol. v, no. 1, October 1934. Restoration labourers' associations are discussed in Lipson, *Economic History of England*, 1931, iii. 389-91, and in Unwin, *Industrial Organization*, 1904, ch. viii.

² Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 268-9.

³ Furniss, E. S., *The Position of the Laborer in a System of Economic Nationalism*,

With this kind of theory, divines had nothing to do; not a single one advocated low wages. They held to the paternal view of employment, in which wages were of less importance, and religion counted more. Mercantilism and not religion was responsible for the new theories.

Nevertheless, certain facets of religious teaching played into the hands of those theorists who wanted to see the labourers reduced to wage-slaves. In the first place, the failure to recognize the importance of wages made it impossible to consider the moral problem involved. On the other hand, if the position of the wage-earner, no longer a member of his master's family, should come to be observed, moral considerations might dictate low wages as a means of achieving that discipline which the authority of the father made possible under a paternal system.

In the matter of hours, for example, divines had taught that the whole time of the servant belonged to his master—every hour of the day. The chief danger here was that servants might be made to work more than was just, and divines had more to say, on the whole, about overwork than about permitting servants to be idle. But if servants were to sell their time by the hour or the day, and were rich enough to idle away part of the day, or even whole days together, might it not be reasonable to lower wages so that workers could not afford to waste time? How else could ignorant men be persuaded to work from four or five o'clock in the morning till nine or ten at night all the days of their lives from childhood until death, as did the virtuous and godly weaver according to John Collinges?¹ Indeed, it was not inconceivable that low wages might come to seem the only substitute for the pious discipline of a paternal master.

Even slavery was justifiable on the grounds of the need for regulating sinful and ignorant men. No Christian minister, it is true, could condone the African slave-trade; and no Christian could treat his slaves as if they were beasts without immortal human souls. But the enslavement of certain men,

esp. chs. vi and vii; Gregory, T. E., 'The Economics of Employment, 1660-1713', in *Economica*, vol. i, no. 1, January 1921; Heckscher, E. F., *Mercantilism*, ii. 152-66.

¹ *The Weavers Pocket-Book: or Weaving Spiritualized*, Epistle to the Reader, and p. 98 (1675).

properly ordered, could be of service to God and mankind. Could not wage-slavery also be justified?

Again, the insistence on the virtues of contentedness and resignation, from a political point of view, was of great service to those men who wanted to see labourers ruthlessly exploited for the benefit of the national wealth, which was for the most part the wealth of the rich. Religious leaders insisted over and over again that servants and farm tenants ought to be given the means of existence, and enough more to allow them to partake of the comforts and benefits of religion. But their right to these things was not to be enforced by themselves. Indeed they were not to complain. Comforted by the fact that they would not be punished for the sins of their betters, they could look forward to the happiness of a life hereafter. 'Flatter not yourselves with the thoughts of long life, but spend every day in preparation for death; and in all your business remember whither you are going and where you must dwell for ever. Take not Christ's redemption and the promises of heaven for doubtfull things.'¹

Whether or not the State should enforce the right of labourers and farmers to live comfortably divines did not inquire. Towerson did say that a servant should seek redress in the courts against an intolerable master. Wages were still regulated under the Statute of Apprentices. But the practice was becoming more and more rare, and was definitely the exception after the Revolution. At any rate, divines do not appear to have expected the State to interfere. Perhaps they realized that paternal ideas of social regulation were no longer popular at Whitehall, Westminster, or in the City; that Englishmen were opposed to clerical interference in political government; or even that it was useless in any case to preach reform to cavaliers who had more pressing problems. Whatever the reason, the government was rapidly ceasing to be paternal and adopting a policy of minimum interference, for moral purposes, in economic life; ministers of religion did not object, either in regard to wages and farm rents, or any other social question. They clung to their patriarchal conceptions of social justice, bolstering up so far as they were able the idea of a personal relation of mutual

¹ Baxter, *The Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, p. 60.

help between employers and employees. But they abandoned the keystone—effective control by State and Church.

They failed to see clearly at what point the facts of economic organization made these older conceptions ineffectual. Nevertheless, the virtues of diligence, faithfulness, and especially resignation, were eminently suited to the newer bourgeois society. The honest worker, conscious that God was his master, a master who required that his servants work early and late, was one who made possible the desired increase in production. The insistence on the duty of contentment and resignation, coupled with a promise of future bliss in the life to come, was soothing to those labourers who rebelled at the harshness of a society where the personal relation, which gave an opportunity for kindness and mercy, was being replaced by the cash nexus, brutally impersonal, even though it may have been accompanied by economic benefits for the majority. Without a general belief in a life after death, wrote Baxter, no one would be able to trust a servant.¹

Again, then, the conclusion is that religious leaders were advocating a kind of social morality which in effect was adapted to the English society of that time—an aristocratic, patriarchal society, which was well on the road to becoming bourgeois. Divines emphasized the virtues which made it possible to obtain justice within the framework of the patriarchal organization which was still common and which still had a strong hold on the English mind. They inculcated the duties of honesty, hard work, and submissiveness, all of them moral virtues, necessary for a successful commercial and industrial society. They failed, however, to protect the poorer classes who were suffering from the economic changes, such as that of inclosure; and they failed to lay the foundations of a social theory which would protect the working men of the new society—they said too little about wages and too much about hard work. On the whole, the theories which they advocated were well calculated to serve the interests of employers.

¹ *A Saint or a Brute in Works*, x. 173 (1662).

PART II
PROPERTY AND SOCIAL CLASSES
I
PROPERTY

But who advances next, with cheerful grace,
Joy in her eye, and plenty on her face?
A wheaten garland does her head adorn:
O Property! O goddess, English-born.

AMBROSE PHILIPS, 1714.

THE institution of property, if not the distinguishing feature of seventeenth-century society, was certainly the most important factor determining the character of that society. At least, religious leaders regarded it as fundamental.

‘For does not society’, asked Robert South, ‘consist in a due distinction of propriety amongst men, and in their peaceable and secure enjoying that of which they are proprietors? Do not all publick bodies bear upon the great basis of *meum* and *teum* between particular persons, and upon the provision it makes to protect those persons in their respective titles to what they possess?’¹

The definition of property, never an easy matter, did not seriously trouble religious leaders. They assumed that their contemporaries would understand, in general, what was meant; and they contented themselves with vague phrases about the use and control of things.

According to Towerson, property is a thing of which the use and profits are restricted to one person or a limited number of persons, and not common to all people. The title to such property may or may not include the right of alienation, so that dominion may be either plenary or usufructuary.²

Baxter defined the right to property as
‘the plenary title to a thing, by which it is called our own; it is that

¹ *Sermon VIII in Sermons*, x. 268. The word ‘Propriety’ had a wide connotation in the seventeenth century, often including political rights as well as those of property. It is usually possible, however, to determine in what sense any particular individual is using the word. See Larkin, Paschal, *Property in the Eighteenth Century*, Cork, 1930, p. 52.

² *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment. All of Towerson’s remarks about property occur here; no further references will be needed for the rest of this chapter.

right to anything as mine, by which I may justly have it, possess it, use it, and dispose of it. This dominion of propriety is either absolute (and that belongeth to none but God), or subordinate, respective, and limited (which is the only propriety that any creature can have). Which is such a right which will hold good against the claim of any fellow creature, though not against Gods. And among men there are proprietors or owners which are principal, and some who are but dependant, subordinate and limited. The simple propriety may remain in a landlord or father, who may convey to his tenant or his child a limited dependant propriety under him.¹

In the *Treatise of the Laws of Nature* Richard Cumberland gave substantially the same definition: a 'right (to the use and disposal of things, and to some human assistance) which can be taken from no one without violating the respect due to the law of nature, and to God its author, I call by the name of some kind of property or dominion.'²

Cumberland did not explain what he meant by the right to 'human assistance': he may have wished to say that every man's labour belongs to himself. At any rate, neither Cumberland nor any other divine ordinarily spoke of labour as a commodity which could be treated like things, and which could be a kind of property. Certainly servants were thought to have sold their time to the master, and to waste this time was stealing from the owner. Nevertheless, labour and property were never discussed as parts of the same subject, and ownership was generally thought of as applying to material objects, especially personal goods, and land.

The 'propriety' thus defined was firmly established, divines thought, on the twin foundations of natural and divine law. There was some disagreement on details, but the broad principles were universally accepted.

In opposition to a popular medieval doctrine Towerson maintained that there had never been a time when the earth and its products had been free for every man to use as he wanted. Pagan poets spoke of a golden age of communism, but poets, he said, are not to be taken literally; they probably meant that the ancients were very generous. In fact, property rights were as old as man: Gen. i. 28, granted the earth to

¹ *Christian Directory*, iv. 107.

² p. 316; p. 32.

Adam. Again, in Gen. ix, God gave the world to Noah, and Noah deeded a part to his son Japhet. Tradition says, moreover, that Noah made a will at his death dividing all land by divine direction; and what could be more reasonable seeing that the Lord is a God of peace and order? Actually Towerson was misinterpreting his sources, for the passages in Genesis spoke only of the fruits of the earth, and not the earth itself.

Other ministers disagreed with Towerson. Richard Mayo, one of the men who lost their benefices in 1662, was doubtful about the existence of property rights in the Garden of Eden, and Samuel Shaw said they had not existed there.¹ But both agreed that God willed that there be property after the Fall. Isaac Barrow thought that

'all things at first were promiscuously exposed to the use and enjoyment of all, every one from the common stock assuming as his own what he needed. Inequality and private interest in things . . . were the by-blows of our fall: sin introduced these degrees and distances; it devised the names of rich and poor; it begot these ingrossings and inclosures of things; it forged those two pestilent words, *meum* and *tuum*, which have engendered so much strife among men. . . .'

But he too agreed that God now sanctioned these troublesome distinctions.² That property in the seventeenth century was divinely sanctioned was what mattered: no minister thought it worth while to argue the question of what property rights had existed before Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit.

For Adam's children, property was plainly made necessary by the word of God. In the first place, there was the Eighth Commandment, the title under which many discussions of property took place.³ How could there be such a sin as theft unless there was ownership? In fact, said Gouge, private property rights are taken for granted in many rules of the Word. Paying debts and taxes, lending and selling, and all the commands forbidding injustice and oppression have

¹ Mayo, *A Present for Servants*, pp. 3-5; Shaw, *The True Christians Test*, p. 50.

² *The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor*, 2 May 1671, *Works*, i. 51-3. John Scott, Canon of St. Paul's, repeated Barrow's words, without acknowledgement, in *The Christian Life* (1651-86), *Works*, 1826, iii. 317.

³ e.g. Towerson; Doolittle, Thomas, *A Complete Body of Practical Divinity*, 1723; Barrow, *Exposition of the Decalogue*, *Works*, vii.

meaning only if material goods are not free to all persons.¹ Indeed, reasoned Baxter, justice is largely a matter of honouring the rights of property. Tillotson wrote that justice consisted in the execution of good laws, 'which are the guard of private property, the security of publick peace, and of religion and good manners'. Without property, said Thomas Manton, 'there would be no justice', because that consists chiefly in giving every man his own. Cumberland pointed out that property rights were consistent with the Justinian principle that 'justice is the constant and perpetual will to give every one his right'.²

Again, the duty of charity presupposed that some persons had rights over material goods which others could acquire only by the gift of the owner. 'We have so much propriety as that no man must rob us; and so much as our works of charity are rewardable . . . for who will reward him that gives that which is none of his own?' The rich were commanded to give, which 'they could not have done if they had not had food and clothing to bestow. So that the denial of propriety would destroy all exercise of charity. . . .'³ To destroy the rights of ownership would destroy the greatest opportunity to do good works, and would be, consequently, to act contrary to the Will of God.⁴ If charity made property necessary, the argument could be reversed, as we shall see below, to show that wealth implied the duty of charity.

Private property rights could also be justified by the law of nature as well as by the law of God. In the first place, reasonable men could assent to the rightfulness of private property as an axiom. The simple assertion that 'the law of nature tells us that there is an his, that is a propriety' was sufficient,⁵ because it was an obvious truth. Samuel Parker

¹ *Sermon XI, Morning Exercises*, i. 229.

² Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, *Works*, xx, 462-3; Tillotson, *Sermon XLVII, Works*, i. 335; Manton, *Sermon II on Titus ii. 12, A Fourth Volume*, p. 84; Cumberland, p. 316; also Steele, Richard, *The Tradesman's Calling*, pp. 95-6.

³ Baxter, *Treatise of Self-Denial, Works*, xi. 309.

⁴ Gouge, *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 229; Tillotson, *Sermon*, 14 April 1691, in *Works*, i. 673; Manton, *Sermon IX in A Fourth Volume*, p. 84, on Titus ii. 12; Conant, *Sermon V in Sermons*, i. 237; Barrow, *The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor in Works*, i. 54-5.

⁵ Bridge, William, *Seasonable Truths in Evil Times in Works*, 1845, iii. 373 (1668); Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion in Works*, xxi. 9, 14.

used a similar argument to refute Hobbes's opinion that in a state of nature all property rightfully belonged to any one who could take it. It is obvious, he wrote, that before all things were divided, each man had a right only to so much as he and his family could use. But this property was his, and no man could take it from him without injustice, or without infringing the law of nature. Thus even before positive law and civil government existed, property rights were established, and no man could justly take what belonged to another.¹ Parker quoted Richard Cumberland to support his argument.

Cumberland, likewise in refutation of Hobbes, said that it was an obvious truth, or axiom of natural law, that all men and things are limited in place and time. Hence two men cannot use the same things at the same time; and therefore, the good of all and each requires that every man, in a state of nature, should have the right to own whatever is useful to his 'life, health, and strength'. This was the primitive right of occupancy: whatever a man took out of the common stock for his own use belonged to him, and it was injustice to deprive him of it. Moreover, future necessities and the provision for children ought to be considered in determining how much a man could take from the common stock and convert into his private property. Thus, even in the state of nature, contrary to the claims of Hobbes, a very considerable amount of private property existed by the authority of natural law.²

The theory, however, that each man had a right in the state of nature to what he could use, did not justify the elaborate and unequal division of material things which existed in seventeenth-century England. It was necessary to develop the argument further.

The inconveniences, continued Cumberland, of holding things in common, ownership being based on use, are so manifest that reason directs us to a more complete and permanent division. It is obvious that a community of goods and wives, as Aristotle pointed out, produces quarrels; every one tries to live off the common stock without working and

¹ *A Demonstration of the Divine Authority of the Law of Nature*, pp. 37-42 (1681).

² pp. 64-5, 67, 69.

producing new goods so that famine is the final result. We may suppose that Adam and Eve learned from experience the necessity of making permanent divisions to procure peace and order among their children. At any rate, civil governments were established in order to make these divisions of property, or to preserve them once they were made.¹

Once the rights of property are settled, and all things are divided among individuals, reason dictates that the division should be maintained, even though it was originally made by the irrational methods of chance or war. The present division, wrote Cumberland, has made possible the creation and preservation of all persons who now exist; it has produced all the happiness there is; and it affords opportunities for more happiness, both in this life and in the life to come. These axiomatic truths do not appear to have advanced Cumberland's argument very far.

But,

'It is manifest that the happiness we now enjoy and have the greatest reason to expect from the present division is greater than any prudent men could hope to obtain by violating and overturning all settled rights, divine and human, and endeavouring to introduce a new division of all property, according to the judgement or affections of any one man whatsoever. . . . Wherefore, a desire of innovation in things pertaining to property is unjust. . . .'²

So much is as obvious as that quadrants and sectors are parts of a circle. In practice, new regulations for the exchange and use of property are needed from time to time for the common good, but the fundamental division ought to be left intact.

Baxter agreed with Cumberland that each person had to have, by the nature of things, some property which he could call his own.

'For natural individuation maketh it necessary that every man have his own food, and his own clothing, at least for the time; and, therefore, it is usually needful to the good of the whole and the parts that each one have also their provisional proprieties; and the difference of men in wit and folly, industry and sloth, virtue and vice, good or ill deserts, will also cause a difference of propriety and rights, though these may be in part subjected to the common good.'³

¹ pp. 32, 65-7, 321-2.

² pp. 321-3; 34-5.

³ *Reasons of the Christian Religion in Works*, xx. 462; *Mr. Baxter's Dying Thoughts*

From this short statement we may surmise that Baxter accepted on the whole the theory which Cumberland developed at greater length: each man had a right to those things which he needed to use in order to live; it was expedient to settle all goods as the private properties of individuals, in order to prevent 'continual war' and the destruction of all 'orderly converse and industry'.¹ Once such a division had been made, and rules had been laid down for the exchange of wealth, intelligence and industry would enable some men to increase their goods more rapidly than others.

Gabriel Towerson followed the same arguments in justifying property on the basis of natural law. But he made an important distinction which the others had missed completely. No one else observed that there was a difference between the kind of property which was immediately consumable by man, and that property which was necessary to produce the former goods; or, in modern terms, consumption goods and production goods.

Towerson, however, said there were two kinds of things which were distinguished by being 'immediately useful', such as food and clothing, or 'mediately useful', such as land. The first, food and clothing and the like, must be privately owned, he said, because they are destroyed by use. So much is axiomatic.

The same could not be said of the second kind of goods. Nevertheless, of these things too he wrote:

'I shall not stick to maintain that the same nature dictates the expedience of a property and perswades to the observation of it: partly, because if men had not distinct proportion in the earth, from whence all the supports of humane life receive either their being or subsistence, they would not be over-forward to give it that cultivation which it requires, as fearing lest what they had so cultivated should be reap'd by others; and partly, because mens necessities and desires being in general the same, there would otherwise, especially since the peopling of the world, have arisen among men perpetual and irreconcilable discords concerning the enjoying of those benefits which it affords. But

upon Philippians i. 23 in Works, xviii. 387 (1683). Baxter also thought that private property had existed before the rise of political societies, *Christian Directory*, iv. 110.

¹ *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, p. 463; *Treatise of Self-Denial*, p. 310.

other foundations in nature, as it will be hard to find, so I think it extremely vain to seek; because . . . property has its original from divine institution. . . .’

From here Towerson proceeded to the arguments based on God’s grants to Adam and Noah.

But in the end he returned again to the arguments from nature. For of what use was it that property rights had been established on a sound basis of right by Adam and Noah, when all the original records had been lost, and much property had changed hands unjustly by violence and fraud? The settlement of the patriarchs could give little satisfaction to modern persons who were doubtful of the validity of their title deeds. Consequently, further demonstration was necessary.

First, said Towerson, by the common consent of men, the first settler owns the land which he occupies. God, approving the changing of common land into private property, leads discoverers by His providence. Since God is the original owner, He can give His lands to any one He chooses.

Secondly, where land is already owned, the titles are good: (a) if no man can show a better, and (b) if they have existed a legal minimum of time. Without this provision anarchy would prevail. Therefore reason shows it to be a necessary expedient. Besides, we may assume that if God permits families to keep their wealth for a long time, no matter how unjustly it was got in the first place, He wants them to have it as their own.

In the end Towerson had to abandon his ingenious Scriptural argument in favour of this, based on the common consent of natural men and on the principle of expediency dictated by natural reason. The argument from the Bible was definitely useful because it showed that God desired His children to establish and maintain the rights of private property. But it was not a sufficient foundation for the settlement which existed in England, and Towerson had to turn again to natural law.

His distinction between consumption goods and production goods was of little use to him. It made no difference to his argument from nature, which was precisely like those of Cumberland and Baxter, both of whom had failed to make

the distinction. At most it was a tribute to his power of analysis.

In the *History of the Royal Society* Thomas Sprat devoted three paragraphs to a survey of the rise of civilization, including a few general remarks about the origin of 'dominion', which apparently included both property and political power. The first men, he wrote, lived off the fruits of the earth, taking whatever they needed. If there was a lack of goods, they took by violence what they wanted from their neighbours. Families formed into clans to protect what they had seized, and the larger leagues devoured the smaller, while the wiser men subdued the multitude and persuaded them to live under laws. 'Thus the riches and dominion that were at first in common were unequally divided: the great, the wise, or the strong, obtain'd a principal share; and either persuaded or constrain'd all the rest to serve them with their bodies.' Sprat made no comment on the moral rightness of these proceedings, but he evidently thought them justified by the results, for he added that by these means civilization had arisen, and from 'these beginnings the inventions of peace and war, the delights of cities and palaces, the delicacies of food, the curiosities of cloathing, the varieties of recreations, took their rise . . .'.¹ After all, it mattered little how the rights of property had been created so long as the present settlement could be justified on the basis of expediency, which was a corollary of natural law. As Stillingfleet said, although 'the division of property was not made by any antecedent law, yet being once made, and so useful to mankind, the violation of it, by taking that which is anothers right, is a manifest violation of the law of nature'.²

The argument for private property based on expediency was very popular with divines.³ Coupled with that derived from the positive commands of the Bible regarding stealing, charity, and the like, the argument seemed impregnable. In fact, no religious leaders, at least, ever thought of writing a rebuttal.

¹ pp. 379-81.

² *Ecclesiastical Cases in Works*, iii. 614; cf. *The Irenicum in Works*, ii. 175 (1659).

³ For further examples see Shaw, *The True Christians Test*, p. 50; Laney, Benjamin, *A Sermon Preached before the King*, 18 March 1665/6, by the Bishop of Lincoln.

But it was thought necessary to confute one or two subversive theories. The first was that which had been proclaimed three hundred years before by John Wycliffe: namely, that proprietary, as well as other rights, were dependent upon grace. Towerson said that there were three objections to this theory of dominion in grace. In the first place, it is assumed that God did not love sinners. Such an assumption dishonoured the deity. Secondly, it made religion suspect, as if men were holy merely in order to get rich. Lastly, it could only lead to anarchy. Baxter pointed out that even God had no title to the world because of His goodness. He owned the universe only because He created it, 'for excelling is no title to propriety'.¹

The other theory or theories which needed refuting were those proclaiming some form of communism as the rightful Christian order. Although the radicals who preached these doctrines were successfully silenced after 1660, a number of divines made a few commonplace remarks to settle the matter. These references usually occur either in a discussion of property, or in a discussion of charity, as a safeguard against the charge of being a 'leveller'. For in the seventeenth century, as now, any one with mildly humanitarian opinions was not uncommonly called a red. When one of the ejected ministers, John Humfrey, advocated that 'servile tenures' be enfranchised to ease the burdens on farmers, the Archbishop of Canterbury's chaplain replied, 'the man may be enclined to be a leveller, and so we leave him to the mercy of the landlords'.²

Gilbert Burnet, in the Preface to his translation of More's *Utopia*, wrote: 'I do not think myself concerned in the matter of his book, no more than any other translator is in his author: nor do I think More himself went in heartily to that which is the chief basis of his *Utopia*, the taking away of property. . . .' John Pearson had said in the famous *Exposition of the Creed* that communion of saints had nothing to do with community of goods, for the practice did not exist when

¹ *Reasons of the Christian Religion in Works*, xx. 491; also Manton, *Sermon IX* on Titus ii. 12, in *A Fourth Volume*.

² Humfrey, *A Proposition for the Safety and Happiness of the King and Kingdom both in Church and State*, p. 66 (1667); Tomkins, Thomas, *The Inconveniences of Toleration or an Answer to a late Book Intituled, A Proposition . . .*, p. 22 (1667).

this article was added to the Creed.¹ He was, of course, repeating the doctrine laid down in the Articles of Religion.

The command to 'sell all thou hast' also needed to be explained, for as Thomas Manton wrote: 'the misunderstanding of this sentence hath fill'd monasteries with monks, and desarts with anchorites.' The command, he wrote, was not a general one but was meant for the young man in the story. We are bound to give up our property willingly only in case God takes it from us by His Providence, or if we are forced to sin by keeping it.² Illustrating the need for prudence as well as zeal, Baxter quoted from Bacon to the effect that this command applied only to those persons who could do as much good with small means as with great.³

Finally, the example of the early Christians was liable to be misconstrued as an authority for some kind of equality in ownership. But, as Towerson pointed out, the example of the early Christians was not a law obliging later ages. Furthermore, their community was a voluntary one: Ananias was punished for lying, and not for holding back his property which he had a right to keep if he wished.⁴ Manton added that the converted Jews thought that Judea was soon to be destroyed, so they used all their goods in common and gave up, for the time, the attempt to increase their worldly estates out of a wise foresight.⁵

When Baxter thought he was dying, just after his arrest for preaching and living in London, he wrote that community of goods would be most desirable, 'if we were here capable of it'.⁶ But he was convinced that we were not capable of it. In the *Treatise of Self-Denial* he had refuted the arguments for communism put forth by a Commonwealth radical, Thomas Bromley by name.⁷

¹ 3rd ed., 1847, p. 413 (1st ed., 1659).

² *Sermon VI* on Mark x, in *A Fourth Volume*, pp. 332-5; also Tillotson, *Sermon XII* in *Works*, i. 93; South, *Sermon VI* in *Sermons*, viii. 148.

³ *Christian Directory*, i. 131.

⁴ Eighth Commandment, pt. i, sect. v. Likewise, Gouge, *Sermon XI* in *Morning Exercises*, i. 229.

⁵ *Sermon IX* on Titus ii. 12, in *A Fourth Volume*; see also B., I., *A Test of a Catechetical-Preaching-Exercise for the Instruction of Families*, pp. 11-13 (1668).

⁶ *Mr. Baxter's Dying Thoughts*, p. 387.

⁷ *Treatise of Self-Denial*, pp. 309-10; Bromley's book was called *The Way to the Sabbath of Rest* (1655).

Property being so firmly established, and so necessary to human society, stealing, of course, could only be regarded as a great sin. Divines preached against it at every opportunity, 'God hath set this Eighth Commandment as an hedge about a man's estate, and this hedge cannot be broken without sin'.¹ Even so small a matter as eating fruit from a neighbour's orchard did not appear unimportant. Baxter solemnly recorded how he had sinned in this way as a boy; Bunyan depicted the depths of young Badman's depravity in stealing fruit.² Even the Archbishop, Sancroft, found time to reply to the question of one John Davenport who had taken a pennyworth of plums from an orchard when he was a boy. To save embarrassment, counselled Sancroft, the fruit might be returned as a gift; or, since the best casuists say that restitution is not necessary when the value of the stolen goods is so small, it might be well to make amends by eating no fruit for one year.³

Baxter agreed that to take the property of another against his will, no matter how small the value, is a great sin. However, he said, if it becomes necessary to steal in order to save a life the good of society must be the criterion. It is usually the case that society is damaged less by the death of one man than it is harmed by his theft, 'because the lives of ordinary persons are of no great concernment to the common good; and the violation of the laws may encourage the poor to turn thieves, to the loss of the estates and lives of others, and the overthrow of public peace and order'. An Aristotle or Alexander, he said, might steal from a covetous shipmaster at sea in order to prevent their death. The hardest case was that of the poor man who could steal so secretly that no one would know, and from whose theft, consequently, no harm would result.⁴ Baxter declined to solve it, although granted his principles, the answer was clear. Certainly

¹ Watson, Thomas, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, p. 378.

² Baxter, *Reliquiae*, pt. i, p. 2; *Badman*, Everyman edition, p. 157.

³ *Tanner MS.* 114, f. 81 a and b. [Bodleian]. The MS. is Davenport's letter with a copy of Sancroft's reply written on the front. It is possible, of course, that a chaplain wrote the reply for the Archbishop.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, ii. 555; iv. 109-12; also Shaw, *The True Christians Test*, p. 51. A good discussion of this passage from Baxter is that of H. G. Wood, in *Property, Its Duties and Rights*, 1922, pp. 155-6.

Baxter did not regard the rights of property as absolute, since he allowed them to be overruled by other considerations. But the examples which he gave were hardly practical cases.

Towerson, however, leaving aside the criterion of the common good, said that God's grant to Adam and Noah was a gift to all men, so that every one has 'a natural right to a portion of it, and consequently, that particular properties are limited by the necessities of those of the same stock . . .'. On these grounds, starving persons may, when all other means have failed, steal. Thus, while Baxter thought of the life of an individual as one good to be weighed against the good of the whole, Towerson gave to each man the absolute right to live. In practice, however, this difference did not necessarily imply that different conclusions would be drawn. In England, said Towerson, the poor are cared for and never need to steal.¹

The limitations which the state could justly impose upon the rights of ownership were not easy to define, and religious writers were reluctant to attempt the task of definition. Besides, it was impolitic to tell the government what it might, or might not do, with the property of the subject: the safest way was to leave king, lords, and gentlemen to decide the problem themselves. Outside the churches the opinion was rapidly growing that clergymen ought not to meddle with secular policy. A few sentences scattered here and there, and the implications arising out of the theory of property, are the only guides we have as to what divines thought about state interference with ownership.

Speaking of the origin of the Civil War, Baxter showed some sympathy with the parliament men who maintained that ship-money was an invasion of the 'subject's propriety', and that arbitrary government left no man 'security of estate or liberty of life'.² On the other hand, Anglican preachers were quick in pointing out that the rule of parliaments or major-generals was no better. Under them, said the Bishop of Worcester in his sermon at the coronation of Charles, 'the

¹ Eighth Commandment, pt. iii.

² *Reliquiae*, pt. i, pp. 16-18.

very names of liberty and property, which were before pretended, were quite taken away'.¹

The phrase liberty and property, wrote Robert South, was 'republican cant', for during the Interregnum no man could call anything his own, except slavery. 'And none such mighty champions for property, as those who have neither a groat in their purse, nor an inch of land which they can call their own; but are a company of beggarly, broken, bankrupt malcontents, who have no other considerable property in the world, but never to be satisfied.'² A monarchy, according to Stillingfleet, is the best safeguard of 'rights and properties'.³

But if, in fact, Charles I, and the governors of the Commonwealth, had unjustly curtailed the rights of ownership, other governments might be able to interfere with property in a just manner. For the injury did not necessarily lie in the action itself; it could be that the injustice was a result of the illegality of the government, or of the methods which it used, and that a lawful government, acting in a proper manner, could do whatever it pleased with the property of its subjects. Specifically, Baxter might very well have said that ship-money was not itself an unjust tax, but was unjust only because it was levied without the consent of Parliament; and Anglican preachers might have justified confiscations and excise taxes if they had been imposed by an authorized ruler instead of Cromwell. In short, the opinions of religious leaders, concerning the governmental regulation of property before 1660, do not tell us much as to what they thought in general about the power of the state in regard to the property of individuals. Divines failed to complete their theory of property by the addition of a theory of taxation. At most we learn that they were quick to resent any unjust interference.

To understand more fully what divines thought of the relation between the powers of the state and the rights of

¹ Morley, George, *A Sermon Preached at the Magnificent Coronation of . . . Charles II*, p. 24 (1661). Similarly, Seth Ward (Bishop of Salisbury), *A Sermon at the Funeral of the Most Honourable George, Duke of Albemarle*, p. 22 (1670); and Edmund Hickerlingill, *Curse ye Meros, or the Fatal Doom*, p. 9 (1680).

² *Sermon II in Sermons*, vi. 77; *Sermon VII in Sermons ix.* 199; *Sermon I in Sermons*, v. 10. Similarly, *The Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, 1668, p. 318.

³ *Sermon*, 30 January 1669, in *Works*, i. 97.

private owners, we must examine again the theory of property itself.

First, the consensus of opinion was that a large amount of property, that which each man used up in order to live, belonged absolutely to individual owners. Whether the individual in a state of nature had an absolute right to all the property he could use, or only to so much as was essential for life, divines did not determine. Nor did they define what they meant by using. For this they may perhaps be excused, since a much clearer thinker than any of them, John Locke, also neglected to explain exactly what he meant by the theory that every man had a right to that property which he could use.

But whatever religious leaders did understand by the theory of ownership, they certainly thought that the private ownership of some property was necessary and just, according to the axiomatic principles of natural law. Consequently, the right to own this property, in so far as it did not conflict with other natural rights, was absolute. It is reasonable to assume that the state, in the opinion of divines, would have no power to interfere with the right to own this particular kind of property.

Not all proprietary rights, however, were based on the use theory of ownership. To justify the elaborate division of property which existed in the seventeenth century, religious writers adopted the doctrine of expediency: natural reason made it plain that all things should be owned by particular individuals, and not communally, in order to secure peace and order. This division of goods, based on expediency, had no absolute validity, but was only a means to an end: hence, goods might be divided among individuals in several different ways, and there was no reason why the state could not make a new division.

In fact, religious writers upheld the power of the state to regulate the ownership of property in some cases. Baxter, as was seen above, thought that the rich ought to bear the burden of taxes needed to support the political power. Towerson wrote that the prince had power to take wealth from his subjects for any public purpose, including poor relief.

The various inheritance laws of different lands, said Richard Allestree, are all just, because the state has the power to determine such rules.¹ If the law of the country, wrote Tillotson, declares that claims against an estate shall not be legally valid after a certain length of time, then the heir to the estate need not pay such claims: the judgement of the state is morally just.²

Cumberland, too, said that the state might make any arrangements necessary for the common good. On the other hand, he was convinced that it would be inexpedient to make any changes. In practice, to achieve the welfare of the whole, a wise government would maintain the *status quo*.

Thus, founding the rights of property on the relative basis of expediency, and not on an absolutist basis, did not necessarily lead to any difference in action. The attainment of the end, order in society, which made some system of private property necessary, might easily require, also, that any system once established should be permanently maintained. The wise state would uphold the rights of property, and interfere as little as possible, whether those rights were absolute, or only relative and expedient. No clergyman was disturbed by the theoretical implications of the abolition of feudal dues—taxes which assumed that property was contingent, was a gift of the state. Whether or not the state had the power to make important changes in the system of ownership was not a vital question and religious writers did not seriously attempt an answer.

In the attack on Hobbes, Cumberland and Parker had turned to a theory of use to prove that property rights existed in natural law, and were not entirely the creation of the civil government. This theory was not sufficient, and religious writers went on to the principle of expediency. But in adopting this latter principle they walked back in the direction of Hobbes. For expediency justified the maintenance of the existing rights of property, no matter how the present owners had acquired their wealth: violence was a usual method,

¹ *Sermon XIX in Forty Sermons* (1684), p. 267.

² *Sermons CXVI, CXVII in Sermons*, ii. 88-91. Similarly, Taylor, *Jeremy, Works*, iv. 373.

according to Sprat. The peace and order of society were the ends which justified the means. Between this theory and that of Hobbes the difference was not great. The fear of anarchy and revolution which lay behind much of his thinking, also motivated in part the thought of his ecclesiastical contemporaries.

In constructing the mosaic which was their theory of property, divines had borrowed many pieces from other thinkers, and the fragments did not always fit together. The principles and arguments of the civil law, of Hobbes, and those which Locke fitted into a pattern at the end of the period, were some of the materials which they used; a standard authority on property was Grotius, whose treatise was quoted by Cumberland, and closely followed by Towerson.¹ Collecting their pieces from these sources, religious writers did not trouble to round off edges and sharp points, and make the changes necessary if the parts were to form one well-constructed whole. It would be a mistake for the historian to look for any one consistent theory of property in the writings of the Christian teachers of the Restoration. But the various ideas which they expounded were relevant to the society of the time.

So long as property was not an absolute right, the aristocratic and patriarchal society of England could continue to exist: the landowners of 1689 were not dispossessed as were those of 1789. The amount of property which any one man could own was not determined on the basis of absolute rights, but by a social standard: how much is necessary for him to maintain his station and perform his function? If the rich did not work their own land, their right to it could be justified on the grounds that they performed other services for society.

The poorer classes, too, had a function to perform in an aristocratic society, and they needed some property in order to perform it. Consequently, if the times were out of joint and wealth was improperly distributed, the state could take wealth from the rich and give it to labouring men. For one of the duties connected with ownership was to protect, and

¹ Perhaps Towerson used Selden's *Mare Clausum*, which took over Grotius's theories of property and family. Towerson makes no acknowledgements.

provide for, those who did not own. If magistrates could fix maximum wages, they could also set minimum wages.

Thus the theory of property which divines preached served to justify the aristocratic class structure of English society, and to provide for the minimum of justice necessary to make it work. On the one hand, labourers who complained that they did the work and therefore owned what was produced, could be pacified by the theory that ownership was founded on expediency: the best interests of society were served by giving some men much more wealth than other men. On the other hand, the same theory could be used to restrain the greedy members of the upper classes, and to protect the poor: some men were rich precisely in order that they might care for the poor.

So far, the theory of property was in the best patriarchal tradition, and was suited to the needs of so much of English society as was still organized aristocratically. Church and state could take whatever action necessary to secure the good of the community: they were not hampered by the belief that individuals had an absolute right to what they owned. Moral ideas could still affect matters of economics. A former domestic chaplain of the Duke of York could still say: 'The Church makes no alteration in properties . . . saving authority of conscience or duty.'¹ The saving clause was a respectable canon of patriarchal social theory.

Though the theory of expediency or utility helped to justify and preserve the aristocratic organization, so that even to-day England retains more remnants of this kind of class structure than does France, yet divines showed no hostility to the bourgeois and capitalist spirit which was modifying the traditional, patriarchal hierarchy. The small independent farmer, the craftsman, and the shopkeeper, all had a right to the property they owned, because they used it in order to live. If some of them attained the position of great capitalists in agriculture, trade, or industry, their rights were still secure. They might, it is true, serve no very obvious social function, nor be able to use reasonably the wealth they accumulated. But the principle of utility again

¹ Jones, Thomas [of Oswestry], *Of the Heart and its Right Sovereign: and Rome no Mother-Church to England*, p. 38 (1678).

dictated that whatever property rights existed at the moment should be maintained, because no change, in the interests of justice, was practicable.¹

Thus by a strained process of reasoning, the very principle which justified the original division of society into rich and poor in order to secure justice, also made it impossible to alter the existing division of property even if it caused injustice. To those men who complained about inequality, divines could answer that some inequality was necessary for order; to those who said that the present system was not best for this purpose, they could answer that any attempt to effect a radical change would be inexpedient. Both propositions could be supported from the Word. For charity and the Fifth Commandment assumed the necessity for inequality, while 'Thou shalt not steal' sanctioned whatever inequality in fact existed.

The principle of utility, then, was admirably fitted to preserve the English society of the reign of Charles II. It safeguarded the gentlemanly possessors of inherited wealth who were liable to the attacks of labourers holding the theory that a thing was the absolute property of him who worked with it and used it. It also defended men of property, including capitalists and men of the middle classes, from critics who said that a change in the distribution of wealth should and could be made, and from the rapacity of a needy government.

The justification of the *status quo* which divines expounded may not have been the best one, but it was right enough to suffice. Gentlemen and moneyed men, when the two could be distinguished, were performing valuable services; and any radical attempt to revolutionize England would have failed, or retarded the great economic triumphs of the next two hundred years. For the economic evils which were still prevalent, divines could only prescribe, not a reorganization of society, but charity.

¹ Cf. Tawney, *The Acquisitive Society*, 1921, esp. pp. 16-18, 57-64.

II GENTLEMEN

TO achieve peace and order in society, it was not enough to divide property unequally. Following in the path marked out by their medieval predecessors, clergymen of the Restoration recognized that the classes created by differences in wealth had to be distinguished further by investing them with different obligations and privileges. If all men were equals, except in the sphere of economics, the subjection and authority, and the division of labour, which were necessary for social life could not be maintained. The unequal division of property, although it was essential, was thought to be insufficient to secure the proper functioning of the social organism. For this purpose, differences of rank and dignity were necessary, as well as differences of property. Inequality of wealth was the basis of the social hierarchy, but it could only be justified if the various classes of that hierarchy were aware that each had its special function to perform, and was entitled to the privileges necessary to carry out that function. Restoration thinkers, following a long tradition, still regarded society as an organization of inequality in all human relationships, political as well as economic.

Sometimes the two could be separated, for children inherited the rank and dignity of their family, even though the fortune had disappeared. Although he was a small farmer, Baxter's father was called a gentleman on account of his ancestry.¹ On the other hand, as we shall see, conservative divines were not willing to accept as gentlemen those poor men who suddenly acquired large fortunes. It was taken for granted, however, that ordinarily a man's rank or station corresponded to his fortune. Most religious writers did not trouble to distinguish between inequality of fortune and inequality of station: each was related to the other, and both were justifiable by the laws of God and nature.

The arguments in favour of social distinctions were not elaborated by clergymen, but were referred to as if they were

¹ *Breviate of the Life of Margaret, the daughter of Francis Charlton . . . and wife of Richard Baxter*, p. 1 (1681).

common knowledge, accepted by all right-minded persons. By the use of analogy, differences of rank were made to appear inevitable as part of the divine organization of the universe. 'What pleasure could a garden afford if there were but one sort of flowers, or one sort of plants?' asked Stephen Charnock, and 'What harmony could there be if all voices and sounds were exactly the same in a concert?'¹ The same God who created night and day, sickness and health, summer and winter, also ordained rich and poor. 'Poor they are, and poor they shall be; do they what they can to shake of their poverty, they shall never be rid of it.'²

That God was the creator of orders and degrees no one doubted. He had organized the world as an army, with Himself as general, and to each man He gave a station. Just as in an army, too, the best man was he who performed his duty, not he who was of highest rank.³ To complain that God should have established equality instead of inequality would be foolishness, for he is under no obligation to please us;⁴ and besides, 'what partiality is he guilty of who scattereth money into a crowd of poor people, although in scrambling some get more than other . . . ?'⁵ In fact, however, social distinctions were not regarded by divines as the mere whims of a capricious deity: they were the reasonable order established by a good God for the welfare of His children. Some, at least, of the purposes of this order could be grasped by human minds.

First, if all men were equal, there could be no government in the world. Some persons must be given the power, the dignity, and the respect necessary to direct and rule their neighbours. Equality would breed confusion, since no man would consent to obey his equal.⁶ To overcome this difficulty, and to establish authority and leadership, religious writers welcomed the hereditary ranks, privileges, and

¹ *Discourse on the Existence and Attributes of God in Complete Works*, 1864-5, ii. 297; *Discourse of Divine Providence in Works*, i. 32.

² Conant, John, *Sermon V in Sermons*, i. 233-5.

³ Janeway, James, *Sermon XVIII in Morning Exercises*, ii. 358-61.

⁴ Conant, *ibid.*, p. 233.

⁵ Barrow, *Sermon LVII in Works*, iv. 263.

⁶ Cumberland, p. 326; Goodman, *Old Religion Demonstrated*, p. 355; Charnock, *Discourse of Divine Providence*, p. 32; Sheppey, Thomas, *The Things that Belong unto Peace. An Assize Sermon at St. Maries in Nottingham*, p. 8 (1682); Conant, *Sermon V in Sermons*, i. 235.

fortunes which they thought were necessary for subjection and obedience.

Secondly, inequality was said to be necessary for trade, industry, and the arts. The majority of men would not work unless they were compelled, and no one would undertake the hardest labours. Division of effort would be impossible, and inefficiency would be the result of the lack of prudent administration.¹ As we have seen above, Sprat thought that civilization could only exist when some men were given leisure, and the right to direct and profit from the work of others.² Economic and cultural life would be reduced to anarchy if none had the power of governing.

To avert such a catastrophe, Providence, wrote John Collinges, disposes the minds of men to their several callings. Some are 'naturally inclined' to husbandry, however dirty and sordid, and others like various unpleasant tasks because they have a 'slavish and servile disposition'. Still others are more nobly disposed.³ Reasonable men recognize that outward estate ought to be suited to the work or calling of the individual.⁴

In order to reinforce the psychological impulses which caused individuals to choose various vocations naturally, Divine Providence set up the social hierarchy. By this arrangement, interest prompted the upper classes to rule and direct the poor, while the latter found it beneficial to themselves to obey the rich. The king himself could not live if the poor did not work for him, while they could not live without the help of the rich.⁵ While gentlemen are relieved from drudgery, the labourers are given employment and direction. Thus all classes are mutually helpful.⁶ In the words of Isaac Barrow;

'So hath the great author of order distributed the ranks and offices of men in order to mutual benefit and comfort, that one man should

¹ Manton, *Sermon IX* on Titus ii. 12, in *A Fourth Volume*; Charnock, *Discourse on the Existence and Attributes of God*, p. 297.

² Above, p. 95.

³ *Several Discourses concerning the actual Providence of God*, p. 95 (1678).

⁴ Conant, *Sermon V* in *Sermons*, i. 238.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 222.

⁶ Goodman, *Old Religion Demonstrated*, p. 356; Manton, *Sermon IX* on Titus ii. 12, in *A Fourth Volume*, p. 84.

plow, another thresh . . . another sail, another trade, another supervise all these, labouring to keep them all in order and peace; that one should work with his hands and feet, another with his head and tongue, all conspiring to one common end, the welfare of the whole. . . .'¹

Finally, in a society in which ranks are based on an unequal distribution of property, Christian virtues could most readily be exercised. The rich are given the opportunity of being charitable, the poor can be patient, and men of moderate fortune are able to be content. Without inequality of wealth, and a recognition that the various classes have varying duties to perform, the most important virtues of religion would be disused.²

The whole case for ranks and unequal division of wealth was well put by George Hickes, Dean of Worcester, in a sermon before the Mayor and Aldermen of London.

'Civil Equality', he said, 'is morally impossible, because no commonweal, little or great, can subsist without poor. They are necessary for the establishment of superiority and subjection in humane societies, where there must be members of dishonor as well as honor, and some to serve and obey, as well as others to command. The poor are the hands and feet of the body politick . . . who hew the wood, and draw the water of the rich. They plow our lands, and dig our quarries, and cleanse our streets, nay, those who fight our battels in the defence of their country are the poor souldiers. . . . But were all equally rich, there would be no subordination, none to command, nor none to serve.'³

Hickes went on to recommend the virtue of charity, for the rich, and humility, for the poor.

Thus, by a happy arrangement of Divine Providence, human society was knit together by a bond of mutual benefit. If all ranks of men performed their duties, every individual would profit. But this desirable result depended upon classes, with their various duties and privileges, being clearly defined, and being accepted and respected by all.

To complain of inequality was to work ruin by undermining the fabric which made possible unity and harmony among men. Ignoring or opposing the ranks and degrees set

¹ *Of Industry*, p. 119.

² Tillotson, *Sermon*, 14 April 1691, in *Works*, i. 673; see also p. 538; Charnock, *Discourse on the Existence and Attributes of God*, p. 297.

³ *A Sermon*, 1 April 1684, before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen and Governors of the Hospitals upon Alms-giving, pp. 7-8.

up by God was 'not only a malapert Quakerly humour, but a principle of sedition and confusion in the world'.¹ The good man would persuade rich and poor to respect difference of station, and he would ask each person to do the work of his particular station. The humble servant ought to order himself lowly and reverently before his betters, and praise God for His wisdom in disposing all things 'into several ranks and orders for their mutual benefit and help'.² From the Fifth Commandment, every man should learn to honour his superiors—'all that are above us whether in power or wealth or age or gifts. . .'.³ For the patriarchal family is a model of the ideal society.⁴

So the classical hierarchical theory continued to be current in the reign of Charles II. But whereas the theory assumed that class structure was static, in fact, English society had for two centuries been increasingly fluid. New classes were rising, old ones were being transformed. In the course of our discussion of these various classes we must bear in mind this relatively new factor of fluidity.

The necessity and righteousness of an hierarchical social system being in their view demonstrated beyond all reasonable doubt, clergymen devoted the major part of their practical teaching to expositions of the duties of the various classes. As civility demanded, the persons first instructed were frequently 'gentlemen, or persons of eminent rank in the world, well allied, graced with honour, and furnished with wealth. . .'.⁵

But before reminding these persons of their proper functions, religious writers thought it necessary to prove that gentlemen had responsibilities. For many men, wrote the author of the *Gentleman's Calling*, believe that the very essence of gentility is having no work to do. To define the

¹ Goodman, *The Old Religion Demonstrated*, pp. 354, 357-8.

² Patrick, Simon, *The Devout Christian Instructed How to Pray and Give Thanks to God*, 9th ed., 1694, p. 427 (1st ed., 1672).

³ Alleine, Joseph, *A Most Familiar Explanation of the Assemblies Shorter Catechism*, p. 100 (1674); also above, p. 1.

⁴ A point of minor interest is that the poor continued to exist and be in need of charity in Bunyan's Utopian state described in *The Holy War*, 1887 ed., p. 205.

⁵ Barrow, *Of Industry*, 1700, p. 128.

duties of a noble person may be thought a levelling project to take away those privileges which Providence and human laws have given him.¹

In order to refute such opinions, leaders of religion emphasized that doctrine of the calling which Max Weber recognized as an important contribution of Protestantism. Ministers of God preached that every man had a calling, gentlemen as well as men of business. If the belief that work in trade and industry was a religious virtue encouraged the growth of capitalism, the belief that gentlemen too were obliged by religion to serve a useful social function tended to preserve the aristocratic framework of English society. For in so far as the teaching of clergymen was effective at all, it prevented the aristocratic classes from becoming decadent and useless, and consequently from being swept aside. Gentlemen were given a place, and exhorted to perform the duties of that place. In part, it is true, they were encouraged to become men of business and play the role of leaders in bourgeois society; but they were also urged to undertake other activities which were equally useful, and which enabled them to retain their aristocratic position. The doctrine of the calling thus had a dual effect: it was suited, as Weber and Professor Tawney have shown, to the needs of the industrial and commercial classes; it also tended to preserve the traditional social hierarchy.

The conception of the calling, and its background, the Puritan ideal of transforming secular life into a religious activity necessary for salvation, are well known to modern students.² As an example we may take the teaching of the *Christian Directory*. Work, wrote Baxter, is commanded by God. In the Bible, man is admonished to beware of idleness and to devote himself to toil.

Having been given the ability to work, it is reasonable to suppose that we ought to use that ability. God is honoured by our labour, and human society is benefited. Besides, idleness results in disease of body and mind, and exposes men to dangerous temptations. Lastly, labour is the ordinary

¹ Preface; Barrow, *ibid.*, pp. 128-9.

² For a fuller discussion see below, p. 187. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, ch. iv.

means of procuring our daily bread, and 'if any man will not work, neither should he eat'.

Having proved the duty of working, Baxter went on to say that every man needed a calling, that is, 'a stated ordinary course of labour'. For unless a man works methodically, his labours are likely to be intermittent, unskilful, useless, and unnecessarily difficult.¹ A calling or vocation is the sensible means of performing the obligation to work.

All these arguments were commonplaces in the seventeenth century, and all religious people, at least, were convinced by them. Divines, consequently, had little difficulty in applying the doctrine of the calling to gentlemen: as men and Christians, gentlemen too had work to do, and they ought to do it with method.

As Barrow wrote, duty to God, the Commonwealth, and to himself obliged the gentleman to adopt some useful occupation. 'If no gentleman be tyed to serve the publick, or to yield help in sustaining the common burthens, and supplying the needs of mankind, then is the whole order merely a burthen and an offence to the world; a race of drones, a pack of ciphers in the commonwealth, standing for nothing, deserving no consideration. . . .'² The *Gentleman's Calling* emphasized the fact that rich and nobly born persons had greater talents given them, and were therefore required to account for more. Enjoying the advantages of education, wealth, time, authority over dependents, and reputation, these men had the most responsibilities. For if God did not expect more work from servants to whom He gave more tools, He would be less wise than the most worldly of masters: who would furnish a hireling with materials without a design to get some return?³

Other clergymen repeated the stock arguments of Barrow and the *Gentleman's Calling*,⁴ realizing that an hierarchical society could be defended only if each rank performed its peculiar functions, and was not a jarring string in the

¹ *Christian Directory*, i. 448-9.

² *Of Industry*, pp. 130, 142-4, 111-14; Baxter, *One Thing Necessary* in *Works*, x. 423 (1685).

³ pp. 12-18.

⁴ Tillotson, *Sermon CLVIII* in *Works*, ii. 381 (1685); Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xvii (1659).

harmony of a busy world. On the other hand, it was also necessary that the functions of the various classes should be different: gentlemen could not defend their position if they had duties which were the same as those of poor labouring men. Gentlemen need not fear, wrote the author of the *Gentleman's Calling*, 'that I mean to put the spade or hammer into their hands, to require them to become either husbandmen or mechanicks: my whole design is founded in their distinction from these, namely, in those things wherein either in kind or degree they excel them'.¹

Baxter and Manton also said that the rich and the poor were not required to do the same labour. For society is a body in which each part has a special service to perform.² Tillotson, emphasizing that a calling was necessary for every man, added that it should be 'suitable to the station in which God hath placed him in this world'. Some persons, he said, 'by the privilege of their birth and quality, are above a common trade and profession . . .'.³ To expect all men to do the same kind of work, said Towerson, is inconsistent with distinctions of rank. The rich, being blessed by God, need not undertake the more unpleasant tasks. But the example of the noble Turks, who were all taught a craft, Towerson commended.

The particular duties of the privileged classes began at home. As employers and landlords, gentlemen were obliged to discharge those functions of educating and disciplining which properly belonged to the head of a patriarchal family. Servants and tenants were to be kept in order. To teach him how to rule a family, said Obadiah Walker, should be one of the chief ends of a young gentleman's education.⁴ His calling required him to govern his dependents.⁵

God himself, preached the *Gentleman's Calling*, gave some men rank and wealth in order that they might rule others. Interest as well as duty prompts servants and tenants to

¹ p. 10; also Barrow, *Of Industry*, pp. 148-9.

² *Sermon XLV* on Hebrews xi. 8, in *A Third Volume*, pp. 336-9; Baxter, *Life of Faith in Works*, xii. 461; *One Thing Necessary* in *Works*, x. 416.

³ *Sermon XLVII* in *Works*, i. 328; *Sermon CLVIII* in *Works*, ii. 381 (1685).

⁴ Also, Jenny, Jehu, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Right Honble Lady Frances Paget*, pp. 11-12 (1672).

⁵ Barrow, *ibid.*, p. 139.

respect the authority of gentlemanly masters. As a Protestant, the author had to admit that actions which were motivated by the desire to find favour in the eyes of worldly masters were not good works. Believing labourers ought to obey the just commands of governors as a religious duty, and not because obedience might bring better wages and lower rents.

But the developed Protestantism of 1660 recognized no insuperable dilemma in asserting that the authority of rulers was buttressed by economic and social superiority, although the obedience of the ruled was unacceptable to God if it was given only for worldly reasons. For

'as God often uses temporal and outward occurrences to produce inward and spiritual effects, so it may happen that those whose first approaches to goodness were mercenary, and out of compliance to others, may by coming within view of it discern it so amiable that they may after love it for its self. . . . As for those that never advance higher than the meer form of godliness, what weight soever it may add to their own doom, yet perhaps that may justly be accounted less mischievous to the world than the contrary extreme. . . .'¹

On the basis of this reasoning, almost trite by 1660, clergymen could justify good works done without faith. Furthermore, they could justify the higher rank and greater wealth which was given to gentlemen to help them maintain authority over the lower classes. By example alone, well-born men might reform the world, for 'we see what a natural aspiring the lower sort have to approach to the condition of their betters'.² Not only his own family, but all his neighbours too might benefit if the gentleman were virtuous and used his position to keep peace and discipline in the community, 'whereto he hath that brave gentleman Moses recommended for his pattern'.³

Besides ruling his family and neighbours in his private capacity as paterfamilias and gentleman, a man of wealth and good birth was expected to undertake the work of a public ruler or magistrate. Clergymen agreed that the army of officials necessary for local and national government ought

¹ pp. 113-14.

² *Gentlemen's Calling*, p. 126.

³ Barrow, *Of Industry*, p. 138; South, *Sermon III in Sermons*, vii. 47.

to be recruited from the upper classes, and they exhorted gentlemen to discharge their public functions conscientiously. Writing in 1658 Baxter advised the rich to govern righteously in order to stop the clamours for popular government.¹ Speaking to the Cavalier Parliament, Nathaniel Hardy, Vicar of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, noted with pleasure and relief that 'we have at this day an House of Commons made up of gentlemen . . .'.² Walker's treatise on education stated that gentlemen ought to prepare themselves for the callings of courtiers, officers, magistrates, and ambassadors.³ Both Tillotson and Manton agreed that the administration of government and public justice was the proper work of men of birth and riches.⁴

By encouraging the aristocratic upper classes to take personal responsibility in government, clergymen were supporting what was an essential and peculiar part of the English political system. England was governed largely by unpaid local officials such as Justices of the Peace, and by Parliament men jealous of their rights and powers, most of them drawn from a class which kept up aristocratic pretensions of birth and heredity, and which took seriously its duty and its privilege of political leadership. Such a governmental system, often admired by conservative and paternalistic historians, received the assent of the clergy of the Restoration. Moreover, by encouraging gentlemen to accept public responsibility, Christian leaders helped to make this system workable, and thus to perpetuate it.

The business of ruling, whether as the private masters of families, or as public officers, was not the only calling which properly belonged to gentlemen. The ministry, according to Walker, was a suitable vocation for men of wealth and rank: Manton told gentlemen that taking orders was no disparagement to their dignity.⁵ But no other writers mentioned the Church in this connexion, a fact which may sup-

¹ *The Crucifying of the World* in *Works*, ix, p. cccxxvii.

² *A Loud Call to Great Mourning* (30 Jan. 1662), *Epistle Dedicatory*.

³ p. 33.

⁴ Tillotson, *Sermon CXVIII* in *Works*, ii, 380; Manton, *Sermon XLV* on Hebrews xi. 8, in *A Third Volume* (1689), pp. 336-9.

⁵ Walker, *Of Education*, p. 33; Manton, *Sermon XLV* on Hebrews xi. 8, in *A Third Volume*, pp. 336-9.

port Macaulay's contention that clergymen were not so respected as they had been.

In cultural pursuits, too, gentlemen were expected to be leaders. As was seen above, the education of the upper classes was broad, and calculated to produce men who would be at the same time gentlemen and scholars.¹ Is any one, asked South, so high as to be above 'reading histories and learning such arts as may render him both eminent and useful . . . ?'² In his *History of the Royal Society* Sprat noted with satisfaction that that body was made up mostly of 'gentlemen, free and unconfin'd'. The advantage of such a membership, he wrote, was that knowledge could be pursued without the necessity of deriving immediate profit, and that all the inquirers after truth were independent of the authority of masters. Tradesmen and artificers cannot experiment because they cannot afford to lose time and money waiting for results; students in the Universities cannot learn to think, for they are obliged to accept as true the opinions of teachers. But a body of gentlemen, all of them equals, bold and generous of mind, may be expected to improve the practical arts of industry and trade which make possible civilization. Sprat went on to a plea that men of rank should join the Society. Unlike their ancestors, he said, the English gentry are well fitted for useful studies because they apply themselves more and more to trade and business. Many families have been ennobled for eminent services, persons of high birth marry citizens, and the Civil Wars have destroyed the formality which kept gentlemen from engaging in commerce. All this, said Sprat, has happened within the memory of living men. If any man still believes that useful studies which promote the material welfare are not proper for men of rank, let him consider

'that traffic and commerce have given mankind a higher degree than any title of nobility, even that of civility and humanity itself. And at this time especially above all others, they have no reason to despise trade as below them, when it has so great an influence on the very government of the world. . . . It is now certain that in those coasts whither the greatest trade shall constantly flow the greatest riches and power will be establish'd.'³

¹ pp. 80-5.

² *Sermon III in Sermons*, vii. 47.

³ pp. 67-71, 406 ff.

Possessed of the desire of the true mercantilist to increase national power by encouraging trade and industry, Sprat begged gentlemen to study experimental science in order to improve manufacture and transport. He did not ask gentlemen to become merchants, or industrialists, although he no doubt approved of that: he only advised them to study and experiment for the purpose of aiding citizens in their businesses. Even so, he was one of the few clergymen who advised the aristocratic classes to take an active interest in commercial life. Perhaps he saw that there was no room in a commercial civilization for a ruling class which did not interest itself in commerce. At any rate, as a young man with no experience of the more traditional and conservative ways which held sway before the Civil Wars, Sprat was convinced that trade and gentility were not incompatible.

Other Churchmen, not yet prepared to make no distinction between merchants and gentlemen, nevertheless thought that the latter had a definite economic function. As the proprietors of the soil, they said, gentlemen are intended to manage their estates efficiently. As rulers in the social hierarchy, moreover, they must pay attention to the economic foundations of their position. One of the causes of the decline of the older landed classes was their inability to adopt habits of thrift and business-like methods: the spendthrift and needy gentleman was a common phenomenon in the seventeenth century. The decline of the aristocratic landowners brought with it, of course, the weakening of the patriarchal social order. The hierarchy could not be maintained if new men were ever rising to the top and older families were continually sinking in the scale. The whole structure depended upon permanence, upon individual families maintaining their position from generation to generation. If men from the city who had no conception of the responsibilities attached to landowning were to keep on buying the estates of careless gentlemen, society would inevitably be transformed. The land-flood must be stopped. By urging gentlemen to look to their lands, the conservative element in clerical thinking attempted to stem the tide.

A man must take good care of his estate, said the *Gentleman's Calling*, in gratitude to God who has given him wealth,

in fairness to his heirs who have a right to suitable portions, and in order to carry out the functions of his class—'those ends to which wealth was designed by God'.¹ Instructing men to be diligent in their particular callings, Tillotson included in the latter 'the management of a great estate, of an honourable rank and quality above others . . .'; and Barrow argued that a gentleman was obliged to look to his fortune in order that he might live according to his rank, provide for his family, and perform good actions.² The usual causes of the decline of noble estates, continued the author of the *Gentleman's Calling*, are a false opinion that great wealth is inexhaustible, and a belief that prudent accounting is beneath the dignity of men of rank. But good management is necessary, and it is neither mean nor difficult. For it is a pleasant task to spend a few spare hours as an overseer; little time or effort is necessary, and worries are dissipated by the knowledge that all is in order.³ Gentlemen should have known that one of the justifications for class divisions was that they made possible more efficient administration.⁴

By such counsels, clergymen did what they could to prevent the decline of the older landed gentry, who were losing their superior position in English society, except in so far as they adopted the methods of capitalist farmers, entered the field of industry and commerce, or married the daughters of rich merchants. Especially in the period of the Interregnum, the old loyalist gentry had suffered reverses at the hands of the newer City men and soldiers, reverses which were not completely righted at the return of King Charles. And their aristocratic contempt for balanced budgets was notorious. The efforts of divines were directed to preserving what was left of the older families, and persuading the newer ones to take upon themselves the duties which were theirs in a patriarchal society.⁵ For these purposes gentlemen were respected by divines, especially Anglicans, and encouraged

¹ pp. 51-2.

² Tillotson, *Sermon* preached at Whitehall, in *Works*, ii. 380 (1685); Barrow, *Of Industry*, p. 139.

³ p. 52.

⁴ Above, pp. 107-8.

⁵ Davies, Godfrey, *The Early Stuarts*, 1937, pp. 270-4, is a splendid discussion of the older and newer gentry.

to preserve their fortunes in order that an hereditary, landed aristocracy might carry on what was left of the feudal tradition.

On the other hand, the bourgeois desires of the capitalist landowners, forever seeking new lands to conquer and never satisfied with the size of their rents, had to be restrained. The calling of a gentleman was not to make money. As the conservative *Gentleman's Calling* remarked, God has given some men wealth just in order that they may be free from such work. 'Let not him whom God hath by a gracious and peculiar providence exempted from this meaner servitude and vassalage to the world, relinquish that so valuable a privilege, give up his ear to be bored by Mammon, when God proclaims a Jubile.' If the opportunity comes to increase estates moderately by spending a few hours, more as recreation than as work, then take that opportunity. 'But the perpetual solicitous pursuit after more wealth is certainly a culpable inordinancy, as being inconsistent with that contentment and acquiescence which is the duty of every man for whom God hath liberally provided. . . .'¹

Another Anglican who spoke of the problem of the limits to the acquisition of wealth was Towerson. He did not, however, confine the discussion to gentlemen. Explaining the exact meaning of 'our daily bread', he pointed out that the Greek phrase could best be translated as 'sufficient for our daily needs'. That which is sufficient, which every man should pray for and expect, is that which will maintain us 'with some tolerable satisfaction and comfort'. For if any one lacks enough to make him comfortable he will be hindered in all his actions, including religious ones. Penury enfeebles the mind and tempts us to sin. Hence, it is reasonable to suppose that God intends us to have that which is convenient for our welfare; and this must be enough to maintain our rank.

'For beside that publick persons cannot otherwise maintain that authority and reputation which is necessary to procure both respect and obedience from those who are committed to their charge, there is this farther reason both for publick and private persons begging of God such a sutable provision, that it is manifestly his will and pleasure that

¹ pp. 53-5, 70-1.

there should be distinction of degrees in the world, and that what may be a comfortable support to one of a low degree cannot be look'd upon as such to him who is of a higher one.'

But what if a man have this sufficiency to keep up his rank? Ought he to stop acquiring, and are we to condemn sober religious persons who work in their callings to make ever more and more wealth when they already have enough? It is true that riches are the blessing of God, and oftentimes he opens a way to them and then men must take that way. Again, wealth may be used for charity; but it is hypocrisy to pray for money in order to give it to the poor, for we may pray that they shall be given it directly. Is seeking after superfluous wealth, then, simply unlawful, except when Divine Providence creates special opportunities?

'I, for my part, do not say so, nor will; as for other reasons, so for this especially, because the publick weal depends, in a great measure, upon such enlargements, and the endeavors after them. But I must say withal, that they have dealt most securely for themselves, and most agreeable to the intention of this petition, who have satisfied themselves with that sufficiency they have attained.'¹

Towerson caught sight of one of the contradictions of capitalist organization when he admitted that the national wealth could most effectively be increased by allowing those individuals who already had sufficient to seek more. There seemed to be no ready way of making the nation, or even its poorer members, richer, except by making the rich more wealthy too. Consequently, he was unable to condemn those men who set no limits to their acquisitive desires. If the individual character deteriorated in the struggle to get more and more, the social group gained in well-being. Nevertheless, Towerson's sympathies were plainly with those gentlemen who had enough to live decently, were satisfied with that, and who had time to attend to the social and political duties of their position. He clung to the patriarchal ideal of an hierarchical society in which each rank had a suitable economic foundation, nicely adjusted to its needs.² In such a society, harmony and balance would be destroyed

¹ *An Explication of the Catechism of the Church of England*, pt. iii, *An Explication of the Lord's Prayer*, pp. 125-9 (1680). Dedicated to Archbishop Sancroft.

² See Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 35, for a medieval parallel.

if any one rank were to go on increasing its wealth indefinitely. Each should have, and spend, only the wealth which was fitted to his place in the hierarchy.

In spending as well as in getting, the ruling consideration was rank. A gentleman ought not to live either as a miser or as a spendthrift, but as a gentleman. As the author of the *Practical Christian* inquired: Have you wasted your estate 'by your sloth and negligence in your calling: or by your prodigal and profuse mispending: or yet, on the contrary, by pinching and too much sparing, and denying thy self the full and lawful enjoyment of thy riches . . .?'¹ Those are the most covetous persons, said Tillotson, who guard a huge fortune, not that they may use it, but that they may be said to have it. Much better to covet in order to eat, drink, and be merry.² Miserly ascetics who deny the appetites of nature are worshippers of Mammon in the worst sense, for they adore wealth as a God, and revere the thing for its own sake.³ If gentlemen are stewards only, and not absolute owners, they may nevertheless regard as the fees of their stewardship what is necessary to support their quality. For they are not like conduit pipes which absorb nothing, but are as veins of the earth which convey water but retain what is necessary for refreshment.⁴

In clothing, costliness should be equated with rank, for one of the important purposes of clothing is to make visible those distinctions created by God. To dress above or below the requirements of one's station is to attack the social order, and levelling in matters of dress is the same as levelling of estates and titles.⁵ The anonymous author of the *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety* reproved people whose clothes were extravagantly expensive, but he pointed out that what was extravagant for one man was not necessarily so for another. He lamented that the only limit now was money and credit, instead of rank, and he approved of laws to right this evil.⁶ Tillotson observed that Dives was not

¹ Sherlock, Richard, *Mercurius Christianus: The Practical Christian*, p. 68 (1673).

² Tillotson, *Sermon XXXVI in Works*, i. 258.

³ *Gentleman's Calling*, p. 69; *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 111-12.

⁴ *Gentleman's Calling*, p. 53.

⁵ *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 210; Clarke, Samuel, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xiii.

⁶ pp. 237-8.

censured 'for enjoying what he had, for wearing rich apparel and keeping a great table. This of itself, if it be according to a man's estate and quality, and without intemperance, is so far from being a fault, that it is a commendable virtue.'¹

The standard of living of gentlemen ought, in the opinion of clergymen, to be sufficiently high to impress the vulgar with the authority of their betters. Only thus, said Tower-son, can government be preserved, and the harmony of degrees maintained.² Baxter referred more than once to the necessity of spending in accordance with one's station. To dress too meanly, he said, may be as much the result of pride as overdressing is. All men should wear sober garments, but sobriety is not the same for all classes. Persons of honour may employ servants for attendance, washing and adorning, and massaging, when lower persons may not. A nobly born man may be said to be poor when his income would make a beggar rich. Finally, 'When a magistrate or other governor doth maintain the honour of his place, which is necessary to his successful government, and liveth according to his degree . . . it is usually mis-judged to be [his] pride.'³ Baxter agreed with his fellow divines that expenditure ought to be suited, not only to income, but also to rank. Gentlemen had, for political reasons, to maintain their dignity, while other rich men, such as merchants, had less reason to live on a great scale.

Thus the theory of the gentleman was a mixture of patriarchal and bourgeois, corresponding to the actual gentleman of 1660, half aristocrat, half business man. No doubt men of birth were still grouped together as a distinct order in the social hierarchy. They had definite, personal functions to perform—they could not justify their position, as some modern persons do, by claiming that they served the function, merely by existing, of saving money and providing capital like human banks. On the other hand, there was a bourgeois element in the teaching that gentlemen

¹ *Sermon LXXII in Works*, i. 532.

² Above, pp. 119-20.

³ *Christian Directory*, i. 230, 290, 465-9; iv. 17, 131, 143-5; *One Thing Necessary*, p. 429.

should avoid, as sins, conspicuous leisure and conspicuous waste—sins especially disgusting to the busy and thrifty man of affairs who never has enough time or sufficient capital to take advantage of all the opportunities which beckon.

III CHARITY

EVERY clergyman of the Restoration must have preached at least one sermon, and probably preached a hundred or more, on the grand duty of charity.

If it was difficult to find enough work for gentlemen who were not officers of government and whose estates did not engross their whole time and energy, and if it was hard to justify the activity of merchants who were chiefly engaged in making fortunes for themselves, both these problems were simplified by emphasizing the duty of charity. For both time and money could easily be used up virtuously in wise giving. Clergymen, if we may judge from the number of sermons on the subject, were never lax in recommending the relief of the poor as a primary Christian obligation.

In founding the virtue of charity upon the positive commands of the Word, ministers did not have to use devious methods of logical deduction, for these commands were, in fact, in the Bible, and plainly stated.

Perhaps the most popular text was the story of Lazarus and the rich man. Occasionally, other verses were elaborated in strange ways to drive home the necessity of giving: the Sixth Commandment includes the duty of charity because the rich are the murderers of those who die of want;¹ and the Eighth Commandment, in requiring men to increase the wealth of others, may be said to include charity, too, as one way of carrying out this requirement.² Such ingenious interpretations of texts were not necessary for the purpose: the simplest reader could see that in the Bible alms-giving was commanded. Yet 'many can finde Scripture against begging, but no food against starving',³ and so divines continually reminded their parishioners of the proper texts which seemed so hard to find.

If the rich man was not condemned for living in a grand manner, said Tillotson, he was damned for refusing to help Lazarus. For such inhuman and impious conduct he was

¹ Watson, Thomas, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, p. 366.

² Adams, Thomas, *The Main Principles of the Christian Religion*, 1675, pp. 122-6.

³ Bury, Ed., *The Husbandmans Companion*, 1677, p. 288.

rightly assigned to burn forever.¹ Again, the precept to sell and give to the poor was not meant to destroy private property, but, as Manton said, it did recommend giving.² In the primitive Church, when there were many poor, goods were used, if not owned, in common. This was a noble example to later ages, wrote Gouge, although it does not recommend to us any kind of communism. It does require us to relieve those who are in need.³ According to Baxter, 'levelling community' is an abomination, but 'charitable community' is a Christian duty. And 'levelling hath not destroyed one soul for ten thousand that an inordinate love of property hath destroyed'.⁴

Another argument in favour of helping the poor was connected with one of the justifications for the division of property. As we saw above, rich and poor were thought to be necessary in order that the virtue of charity might be exercised. 'It is a mercy of God to the rich, that he hath so ordered it by his Providence that they shall have the poor with them alwayes, in that he thereby affords them daily occasions of making themselves blessed by the continual exercise of their bounty.'⁵ But the argument could easily be turned to show that charity was a positive duty if rich and poor in fact existed. Christian preachers had long seen the truth of such reasoning, and had erected upon it the familiar doctrine of stewardship.

Because He had created the world from nothing, God was its absolute owner. He had the right of using and disposing of all things without limitation, even the houses, lands, cattle, and money which were commonly said to belong to men. From this it followed that no mere man could ever hold an independent title to his property. At the most, he could be but a tenant at will or a steward. Just as a master, in Roman law, is the real owner of the property of his slave, so our property belongs to God. Our title to it holds against all other men, but not against the Owner.⁶ No idea was more a

¹ Tillotson, *Sermon LXXII* in *Works*, i. 532, 537.

² *Sermon VI* on Mark x, in *A Fourth Volume*, p. 336.

³ *Sermon XI* in *Morning Exercises*, i. 229.

⁴ *Treatise of Self-Denial*, p. 310.

⁵ Above, p. 90; Ford, Simon, *The Blessednesse of Being Bountifull*, 1674, p. 85.

⁶ Clarkson, David, *The Lord the Owner of All Things* in *Sermons and Discourses*,

commonplace with clergymen than this of stewardship. Both Anglicans and Nonconformists repeated it to monotony. An 'old boy' of Charterhouse returned to preach that no man was a freeholder;¹ the *Gentleman's Calling* spoke of property as a talent given in trust to stewards;² and many others reiterated the well-worn phrases.³

Granted that all property was held in trust for God, and was subject to His commands, divines had little difficulty in proving that He wanted some of it to be given to the poor. All the Biblical arguments were used again, and God was said to have given the poor bills of assignment on the rich. In the Christian religion, all men are brothers, equal before God, who wishes all his children to have a share in their patrimony.⁴ Barrow, quoting from the Fathers of the Church, wrote: 'Tis the hungry man's bread which we hoard up in our barns, 'tis his meat on which we glut, and his drink which we guzzle. . . .' He added, it is true, that 'these things, spoken after the holy fathers, are to be understood with reasonable temperament, and practised with honest prudence . . .'. The words were evidently too strong for Restoration stomachs, but the principle that the poor had a right to the necessities of life was accepted. Believing that in the state of nature property divisions had not existed, Barrow concluded that every man had still enough title to earthly goods to enable him to live. God assigned to every one a portion, and it was injustice to keep the poor from their inheritance.⁵ Samuel Shaw, the Nonconformist preacher and schoolmaster, agreed that original equality limited the rights of property, which are 'not so determinate and severe as some men imagine'.⁶ Charity, in fact, is not only a voluntary act of mercy, but a necessary act of justice, for the poor have a right to some property.

pp. 304-10 (1696); Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, pp. 490-1; *The Divine Life*, pt. i, ch. xiii, in *Works*, xiii (1664).

¹ Durham, Will, *Encouragement to Charity*, p. 9 (1678).

² pp. 2, 59.

³ Kidder, Richard, *Charity Directed*; Swinnock, *Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, ch. viii.

⁴ Kidder, *Charity Directed*; *Gentleman's Calling*, pp. 55, 77.

⁵ *The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor in Works*, i. 34-5, 51-3 (1671); also Scott, John, *The Christian Life in Works*, iii. 317.

⁶ *The True Christian's Test*, pp. 50-1.

If society is founded on a contract, would the lower classes have been so foolish as to agree to starve? The questioner was William Durham, one-time proctor in the University of Oxford, and chaplain to the Duke of Monmouth. The poor, he answered, certainly retain their title to sufficient property to enable them to live, and it is robbery to take this much from them. Society is like the human body, in which each part has both its function and its reward.¹ Both *The Whole Duty of Man* and *The Gentleman's Calling* taught that to neglect the duty of charity is to defraud the poor, and to cheat God, who has given all property to the rich as a trust.²

Charity was not, then, merely an appeal to the generosity and goodwill of the rich. It was a matter of justice, and the rights of poor men. *The Whole Duty of Man* was explicit on this point. Alms-giving

'is so much a due from us, that we sin not only against charity, but justice too, if we neglect it; which deserves to be considered, the more to stir up our care to the performance, and the rather, because there seems to be a common error in this point. Men look upon their acts of mercy as things purely voluntary, that they have no obligation to; and the effect of it is this, that they are apt to think very highly of themselves, when they have performed any, though never so mean, but never blame themselves, though they omit all. . . .'³

At a later date, when property rights were, in effect, absolute rights, charity was not the right of the dispossessed classes, but merely a kindly gesture on the part of the rich.⁴ But in the seventeenth century property was not, in the eyes of clergymen, at least, absolute; and charity was justice. Nevertheless, the persuasive arguments of divines are some evidence that they thought the rights of the poor were unenforceable. Instead of advocating some social reorganization in order to secure justice, ministers made emotional appeals to the not-too-tender consciences of wealthy men. Indeed, the idea of stewardship was double-edged, for it

¹ *Encouragement to Charity*, pp. 9-10.

² *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 283; *Gentleman's Calling*, p. 59; also Manton, *Sermon IX* on Titus ii. 12, in *A Fourth Volume*, pp. 87-8; Clarke, Samuel, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxvi.

³ p. 388; also Gouge, *Surest and Safest Way of Thriving in Works*, p. 171 (1673).

⁴ Holland, Henry Scott, 'Property and Personality', in *Property, Its Rights and Duties*, pp. 190-1.

served as a justification of the *status quo* as well as a reason for giving alms. Like 'freedom of contract', stewardship was a useful device which assumed equality and excused the inequality which actually existed; it permitted difference of wealth, in fact, while presupposing Christian community.¹ We must be careful not to exaggerate its equalitarian aspect.

A favourite, if not too plausible, argument which was used to persuade the rich to give was that charity increased the wealth of the giver. God was a bountiful master to the rich, who were his stewards. By secret methods He made the estates of the charitable to grow, so that the more a man gave, the more he received.²

The Whole Duty of Man quoted Scriptures to prove the point: 'The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself.'³ Baxter was able to point to his friends Henry Ashurst and Thomas Foley, both of whom gave freely to charitable causes, and both of whom never ceased to grow richer.⁴ Of himself he records that the more he gave the more he had, and when he gave less, he was able to save less.⁵

The most eminent authority on alms-giving in the Restoration period, himself a charitable man, was Thomas Gouge. Although he was an ejected minister, he was admired by Anglican and Nonconformist alike, and Tillotson delivered his funeral sermon. More than any other, he insisted that giving was not a hindrance to getting. One of his books, containing prefaces by John Owen, Manton, William Bates, and Baxter, was entitled *The Surest Way of Thriving or, a conviction of that Grand Mistake in many, that what is given to the poor is a loss to their estate; which is directly contrary as to the experiences of the charitable, so to the testimony of God's spirit in divers places of Scripture*.

He gave concrete examples of men who profited from

¹ See Walton Hamilton's article, 'Property', in the *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*.

² Manton, *Sermon VI* on Mark x. 21, in *A Fourth Volume*, p. 338; Hickes, George, *A Sermon*, 1 April 1684, p. 26; Barrow, *The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor*, p. 55.

³ p. 377.

⁴ *Faithful Souls Shall Be with Christ*, in *Works*, xviii; *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, iii. 93; *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, pp. 42-3.

⁵ *Reliquiae*, i. 89.

being generous. Daniel Waldow, John Walter, William Pennoyer, and Thomas Arnold, all merchants of London, found that the more they gave the more they got. John Clark, Edmund Trench, and John Bathurst, Doctors of Medicine, gave their Sunday fees to the poor and died rich men, Clark becoming President of the College of Physicians. The author's father, Dr. William Gouge, gave one-seventh of his income in alms, yet his income never ceased to grow. More examples could be given, wrote Gouge, and there can be no doubt that the estates of the bountiful are secretly blessed.¹ Conversely, the estates of the uncharitable tend to wither away. God takes back His wealth from unjust stewards.²

The belief that charity and interest agreed, then, was not held by a few superstitious cranks, but was the considered belief of some of the most renowned clergymen of the day. It was part of the vicious philosophy which taught that there was no distinction between the selfish interest of ordinary men and the claims of social morality. Divines, however, did not accept the extreme statement of this philosophy of individualism. Gouge warned men not to fall into the error of good works, nor perform the duties of charity primarily for the reward which usually accompanied that performance.³ The will of God was still the prime reason for living a good life. Nevertheless, the reward was a good argument in persuading the rich. It cannot be doubted, too, that it was an argument substantiated by experience; for the same religious temper of mind which led the Protestant to obey the command to give alms also made him the best man of business.

Immediate interest, growing richer here and now, was

¹ pp. 115-37, in *Works* (1673); *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 237-8. Bathurst may also have attributed some of his success to the fact that he was Oliver's physician. See *Dictionary of National Biography*. Pennoyer presented a farm in Norfolk to Harvard College, in whose possession it remained until 1903; Morison, S. E., *Harvard College in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 383-7.

² *Surest and Safest Way of Thriving*, p. 144; also *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 284-5; Wilkins, John, *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, 1704, bk. ii, ch. iv (1st ed., 1672); Lukin, Henry, *The Chief Interest of Man: or, a Discourse of Religion; clearly demonstrating the equity of the precepts of the Gospel, and how much a due observance thereof doth conduce to the happiness and well-being, as well of humane societies, as of particular persons*, 3rd ed., 1718 (1st ed., 1665).

³ *Surest and Safest Way of Thriving*, pp. 125-6.

not the only motive for charity. In the next life, as well, the virtuous would expect a reward. According to Gouge, giving alms was a lending to God on usury.¹ A usury indeed, wrote Baxter, for the rate is one hundred to one.² Both men retold the story of Evagrius of Cyrene, the heathen philosopher who became converted. He gave three hundred pounds of gold to his Bishop, demanding a receipt to be redeemed in heaven. After his death the Bishop opened his grave and found the receipt marked, 'paid'.³

Every sermon and writing on alms-giving repeated the stale phrases about lending to God and laying up treasure in heaven.⁴

We should be grateful to the poor, wrote John Conant, for by merely existing they give us the chance to give alms and thus to receive a reward in place of perpetual torment.⁵ Exactly why the rich should be rewarded for not robbing the poor of their just property was a minor point which troubled no one. Baxter affirmed that the rich were stewards who had sufficient title to their goods to justify rewarding their works of charity.⁶ No one questioned that a reward would in fact be given, or that the stingy would be punished.

A more immediate threat than hell fire was the danger of social unrest and violence. As we have seen, by the happy management of Divine Providence, rich and poor were united into one body by their mutual dependence.⁷ 'The poor cannot live without the charity and assistance of the rich, and the rich cannot live without the service of the poor.'⁸ If working people could not earn enough to keep themselves from starvation, they could be laid under obligation to the rich who gave them alms, and social unity would be strengthened.⁹

If men of substance neglected this duty, either the poor

¹ *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 247.

² *A Model for the Maintaining of Students*, Preface.

³ Gouge, *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 248-9; *A Sermon of Good Works in Works*, p. 595; Baxter, *The Crucifying of the World*, Preface (1658).

⁴ e.g. Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xvii; Barrow, *On the Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor in Works*, i. 55 (1671); Tillotson, *Sermon XV in Works*, i. 111-12 (1686?).

⁵ *Sermon V in Sermons*, i. 245.

⁶ Above, p. 90.

⁷ Above, pp. 108-9.

⁸ Conant, *Sermon V in Sermons*, i. 222.

⁹ Goodman, *The Old Religion Demonstrated*, p. 358.

would die off and the work of the world would remain undone, or they would revolt. Three men stated the problem with precision. Preaching to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, Thomas Pittis, a royal chaplain and Rector of St. Botolph's, urged the wisdom of charity, for

'if a tolerable care were not taken of the needy, the greatest empires could quickly be laid in dust and ruins, when the poor are every where more numerous, and consequently, stronger, than the rich. . . . The rich cannot live without the poor, and in common prudence they ought to be maintained that some may do the drudgery of the world. What pitiful trades should we quickly have in this renowned city, had we not porters and carmen to bear the burdens? How would the destroying plague invade us, had we not scavengers to cleanse the streets? Nay, great men, and the most delicate ladies, would hardly know how to live; but pestilence and infection would seise their houses and the very air in which they breathe had they not those contented, and in their condition, happy inferiors, to endure the heat and burthen of the day, whilst they keep all sweet and clean.'¹

The second warning came from Baxter.

'No kingdom on earth is so holy and happy as to have all or most of the subjects such confirmed eminent saints as will be contented to be undone, and will love and honour those that undoe them.'²

The same idea appeared in the *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*.³

Lastly, Thomas Cartwright, preaching in the presence of the Lord Mayor in St. Paul's, appealed to the clergy:

'Let us remember our late afflictions, and vows which we made in case of a restitution, and let the hungry bellies of the poor and needy who have suffer'd with, or like us, experience the benefit of our preferments, that the envious eye of the worst of the laity may not repine, nor the foul mouths of the scum of the people rail at our large incomes.'⁴

Cartwright had been afflicted during the Interregnum with the vicarage of Walthamstow, and after the Restoration he had good reason to fear the envy of the laity, for he was a pluralist whose income must have been handsome indeed.⁵

¹ *A Spittle Sermon*, pp. 8-9 (2 April 1684). Perhaps Pittis had listened to Hickes the previous day; see above, p. 109.

² *Christian Directory*, iv. 138 and 17.

³ Above, p. 75; also p. 76 for a similar statement by Steele.

⁴ *The Danger of Riches*, p. 32 (1662).

⁵ *Dictionary of National Biography*. Cartwright was one of the clergymen who found it expedient to leave England with James II.

The appeal to charity was thus based in part on a vulgar threat, and even more vulgar promises. Class war and eternal damnation for the rich would be the result of omitting the duty of giving alms; peace, increased wealth, and eternal bliss in another world were the reward for good works. At the worst, men of wealth were to be blackmailed and bribed in order to force them to be charitable. But if the means were doubtful, the end was reasonable: clergymen wanted to alleviate the worst sufferings of the poor, and to secure, if possible, a sufficient livelihood for all men. At the best, they preached of the Christian brotherhood of man, the moral worth of every child of God, and the justice of giving each man and woman the economic goods necessary in order to live a good life. Before drawing conclusions, however, we must examine the specific kinds of charity which ministers recommended, and the particular applications of the command to give.

The proportion of a man's income which should be given away was difficult to determine. Every one agreed that rank should be maintained, and suitable portions left to children. But it is necessary to add that much more was said about cutting down expenditure than about living according to social status.

Wasting and luxury were regarded as personal evils leading directly to the sin of sensuality. It is a papist superstition, wrote David Clarkson, to believe that luxury is not in itself wicked.¹ Divines did not, however, overlook the fact that riotous living was also a social evil.

Luxurious and idle living, said Conant, is a sin against the poor.² Flaunting costly clothes in the face of a poor man tempts him 'to repine at the unequal distribution of Providence, and add sin to his misery'.³ To be frugal is to be grateful to the 'chief Owner'.⁴

Even misers, according to Baxter, are better for the commonwealth than prodigal persons, who not only rob the poor, but employ many men in useless labour.⁵ Retrench expendi-

¹ *The Practical Divinity of the Papists in Works*, iii. 257.

² *Sermon I in Sermons*, v. 19-21.

³ *Ladies Calling*, pp. 56-7.

⁴ Baxter, *Christian Directory*, iv. 147.

⁵ *Ibid.*

ture to have money for alms was the cry and plea of more than one divine.¹ Even the relatively poor might contribute if they lived according to their degree and spent less time in company-keeping at inns.² Occasionally, the rich might be called upon to give up all income above that necessary to sustain life, but the two men who held this belief did not think that the time had arrived for such revolutionary sacrifice.³

Ordinarily, wrote Baxter, men should live well within their income and according to the style of their rank; superfluous wealth should be given away. But any expenditure is wrong if in rational probability a greater good may be done by a different use of the money. This does not mean, however, that all spending for luxuries is wrong: a person of quality, for example, may entertain powerful men sumptuously in order to escape their displeasure and be able to do more good later.⁴

Both Baxter and Tillotson praised the example of Thomas Gouge, who gave one-third of his income of £150 to charities.⁵ But Gouge himself insisted that no rule could decide the amount to be given away, although he suggested one-tenth as practical for many people.⁶ In reply to a question from Gouge, Baxter wrote him a letter pointing out that 10 per cent. was far too much for some, and far too little for others, according to the size of income, and the requirements of social position. Moreover, a man must consider whether his income is derived from safe capital investments, or is uncertain, depending upon his own labour or a precarious business. For these reasons Baxter was unwilling to fix upon a definite percentage to be given to the poor, although he agreed that a tenth was proper for many people and had been sanctioned by God in the Old Testament.⁷

¹ Kidder, *Charity Directed*, p. 32; Gouge, *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 235; Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Fifth Commandment, pt. iv.

² Kidder, *ibid.*, p. 37; Ford, *The Blessedness of Being Bountifull*, pp. 79-80.

³ Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. 26; Baxter, *Christian Directory*, iv. 147.

⁴ Baxter, *ibid.*, pp. 143-4.

⁵ *Reliquiae Baxterianae*, iii. 147-8; Tillotson, *Sermon* preached at Gouge's funeral, 4 November 1682, in *Works*, iii. 268.

⁶ *A Sermon of Good Works* in *Works*, p. 585.

⁷ *Christian Directory*, iv. 193-6; also *Gentleman's Calling*, p. 57; see also John Goodman, *The Golden Rule*, pp. 26-7 (1688).

The rich, said Tillotson, are better able to determine impartially the proper amount because they have the advantage of knowledge and have often themselves been poor, while the poor themselves are ignorant and have had no experience of the necessities of the rich.¹ Baxter and Gouge both urged men to give before their death,² and Kidder made the unpractical suggestion that merchants should not argue about prices, but give the difference to charity.³ Kidder and Baxter, again, recommended that a definite sum be set aside each year in order to make sure that men were giving their proper share.⁴ What that sum should be ministers left to each man to decide.

A 'charitable heart, with the help of prudence, is the best judge of the due proportion which we should give.'⁵

Prudence was an essential in giving, and divines advised against indiscriminate charity which was not carefully calculated to promote the greatest good.⁶ The worldly acumen of the Protestant made him doubt whether scattering largesse was wise, and therefore virtuous. Good alms were those rationally calculated to produce the best results. In the *Christian Directory*, prospective givers could find some general principles to guide them. To quote an example, the souls of men, wrote Baxter, are more important than their bodies, 'but in time, the body is oft to be preferred before the soul, because if the body be suffered to perish, the helping of the souls will be past our power'.⁷

The practical works which clergymen recommended are evidence that they did not always bear in mind Baxter's materialistic counsel to attend first, in point of time, to the bodies of men. As the most important, religious charities were often put at the head of the list. Baxter himself said that money for converting the heathen was the best of all good works; he took an active interest in John Eliot's work

¹ *Sermon X in Morning Exercises*, i. 197-8.

² *Christian Directory*, iv. 197; *Sermon of Good Works in Works*, p. 584.

³ *Charity Directed*, p. 32.

⁴ Baxter, *Christian Directory*, iv. 192; Kidder, *Charity Directed*, p. 33.

⁵ *Christian Directory*, iv. 195.

⁶ Gouge, *A Sermon of Good Works in Works*, pp. 593-4; Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, pt. vi.

⁷ Pt. iv, pp. 193-4.

in New England, and praised Edward Pocock, the Oxford professor, for his Arabic translation of Grotius's *De Veritate*. Next, he recommended maintaining a godly ministry, a charity especially necessary for Nonconformists,¹ since many ejected clergymen were in need of the bounty of rich sympathizers. But even in the Anglican fold some sheep were without a shepherd, and Baxter advised the rich to provide assistants for large parishes. Likewise referring to Eliot's Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England, Gouge emphasized the good of foreign missions. He also advised setting up lectures, and increasing the stipends of poor ministers as an especially worthy charity.² Thus much money was to be spent which was calculated to make men happier in a future life rather than on this earth. The heathen Indians refused, however, to trade their hunting-grounds for happier ones in the next life. Divines might say that John Eliot needed more funds to carry on the work; but pious business men might answer that they could more easily buy or take Indian lands outright.

A more useful kind of charity was that directed toward educational schemes. Books to the poor, endowments to schools, and scholarships to the Universities were given largely for religious reasons, as we have seen; the betterment of man's estate was, however, also a motive, and very often an effect.

'Is it not possible', asked Stillingfleet, 'that by the charitable education of children in the ways of learning and knowledge some may arrive at a greater capacity of serving God and their country, than if they had been grinding in a mill, or tugging at an oar all that while?''³

Besides founding schools for the poor, the rich were to set children as apprentices and provide funds to young men who wanted to enter into business. For this purpose, endowments could be set up and money lent to young tradesmen.⁴

'Those who labour in an honest calling, but yet are

¹ *Christian Directory*, iv. 190-1; *How to Do Good to Many in Works*, xvii. 329; *Reliquiae*, ii. 290.

² *Surest and Safest Way of Thriving in Works*, pp. 162 ff.; *A Sermon of Good Works*, pp. 585-6.

³ *Of Protestant Charity in Works*, i. 313; above, ch. ii, pt. i.

⁴ Ford, *Blessedness of Being Bountifull*, pp. 135 ff.; *Christian Directory*, iv. 191.

oppress with their charge, or disabled for a time by sickness, or some other casualty, these many a time need as much, and certainly deserve much better than common beggars. . . .¹ After a disastrous fire at Northampton, charitable men gave money to business men who in turn employed the poor. Such giving, preventing idleness and beggary, and having a permanent effect, was thought to be truly prudent charity.² Lending, said Towerson, encourages the recipient to be industrious, since he must repay. But forgiving debts and delaying the date of foreclosure were also recommended.³

Wages and rents were often discussed under the heading of charity. For it was assumed that most labouring people did not produce enough to pay for their keep: wages and rents which permitted them to live were really the bounty of the rich. The economist Gregory King estimated that more than half the population in 1688, or 2,825,000 persons, used up more wealth than they produced. And he did not include in this number men with large incomes who did nothing at all: the decreaseers of wealth were the poor labourers.⁴ If these men, then, were to live by their wages, or by enjoying low rents, it must be the charity of the rich which allowed them to do so. Consequently, the teaching about the duties of masters and landlords to provide tolerable conditions for the working classes was based on an appeal both to charity and to justice.

To turn off labourers in slack times was apparently as unjust as it was uncharitable.⁵ Thus one of the most important charities was paying labourers that which a different economic theory would determine as their rightful earnings.

Widows and orphans, invalids and sick persons were, of course, worthy recipients of relief.⁶ But less attention was paid to medical charities than in modern times. The

¹ Tillotson, *Sermon*, 14 April 1691, in *Works*, i. 672; also Gouge, *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 226.

² Kidder, *Charity Directed*.

³ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, pt. vii; Gouge, *Sermon of Good Works*, p. 589.

⁴ Unwin, George, Introduction to *The Reverend Richard Baxter's Last Treatise*, p. 6.

⁵ Conant, *Sermon I in Sermons*, i. 22-4.

⁶ Kidder, *ibid.*; Gouge, *Sermon of Good Works*, p. 594.

minister and the squire's wife were the usual doctors for the poor, unless they were lucky enough to take sick on Sunday, when pious physicians might be expected to attend without charge.¹

Kidder and Gouge also spoke of helping poor prisoners.² Imprisonment for debt was a great hardship, and the practice of paying jailers for better accommodations afforded ample opportunity to help those in prison. The author of *The Whole Duty of Man* thought that it was uncharitable to imprison a man for debt, especially since confinement made it harder for the debtor to pay.³ It is surprising to find that clergymen had so little to say about the jails: nothing was said about the condition of the prisons themselves. Prison reform was a secular and humanitarian movement.⁴

Another special group was singled out by Tillotson as particularly worthy of alms. Those 'who are fallen from a rich and plentiful condition, without any fault or prodigality of their own . . . these are more especially objects of our charity and liberal relief'.⁵ Why this should be so he did not explain, but it was a belief which naturally accompanied the acceptance of a society composed of higher and lower classes.

Finally, strangers were to be entertained.⁶ Exactly what strangers no one said. Perhaps travellers of quality had difficulty in finding suitable accommodation outside London and gladly accepted the hospitality of local magnates. Certainly Protestant refugees from abroad, especially after the repeal of the Edict of Nantes, gave ample opportunity to the hospitable.⁷

After these special groups there remained as objects of charity the great mass of poor working people. Many of these fell into the group which was to be given better wages and lower rents. Unfortunately, masters and landlords were

¹ Above, p. 129; Baxter had great success in Kidderminster as an amateur physician, *Reliquiae*, i. 89, and he advised young ministers to study a few books on general medical treatment, *Christian Directory*, iii. 924.

² *Charity Directed; Sermon of Good Works*, p. 594.

³ p. 381; also Taylor, Jeremy, *Ductor Dubitantium*, in *Works*, x. 146.

⁴ Gray, Kirkman, *A History of English Philanthropy*, 1905.

⁵ *Sermon*, 14 April 1691, in *Works*, i. 672.

⁶ Barrow, *Of Industry*, p. 138; Gouge, *Sermon XI in Morning Exercises*, i. 227.

⁷ Tillotson, *Sermon XLVI in Works*, i. 323 (1685?).

not sufficiently charitable, and the problem of supporting these men remained. To them were added the unemployed. Gregory King estimated that there were, dependents included, more than a million and a quarter cottagers, paupers, and vagrants, the great majority of whom were in perpetual need of alms. Above these were a million and a quarter common soldiers, seamen, and labouring people, many of whom lived under the shadow of unemployment. Unfortunately King did not distinguish those labouring people who had a little plot of land to support them in bad times, from those who depended on wages alone. He did not notice that a propertyless, wage-earning proletariat was growing up in the place of the old independent producers. He did not notice the rapid growth of capitalist industry in his own day. Nevertheless, there were many working men whose sole livelihood was their meagre daily wage, and who needed charity in periods of depression. Even servants who lived with their masters, and for whom the problem of wages was less important, since they were given food and lodging, might be jobless in poor times.

Besides all these there were Baxter's poor husbandmen, and some thousands of small shopkeepers and tradesmen, any of whom might have to face bankruptcy and starvation. In fact, a very large proportion of the population was in continual need of charity, and probably half the people of England needed help in poor times, although there is no reason to suppose that they got it.¹

The state had two policies for dealing with poverty. First, there were deterrents and punishments. Idle beggars could be whipped, and imprisoned in bridewells. By the Act of Settlement, poor persons were kept from marrying, or even living, outside the parish where they were born. Man and wife might be separated, each being sent to his or her own parish. The effect of the Act of 1662 was certainly to increase poverty by hampering the mobility of labour; but its intention was to reduce poverty. For every person had a right to some dole or relief in the parish where he was born. Overseers of the poor, and churchwardens, under the direction of

¹ King's statistics are summarized by G. N. Clark, *The Later Stuarts*, 1934, p. 25.

the Justices, were supposed to provide for the needy of their own parishes. The corruption, inefficiency, and evil effects of this system are well known.¹

But some help was given. More than half a million pounds was being expended yearly by the end of the century;² wages were still occasionally regulated by justices, young persons were apprenticed by the parish, and some attempt was made to provide employment in workhouses, or to farm the poor to masters.

The workhouse which attempted to employ the poor at a profit was not much used until the next century, but many persons were advocating the establishment of such institutions during the Restoration. Mercantilism saw in the labour of the population the great source of wealth for the nation; practical men were appalled, quite rightly, at the amount of labour which was not utilized. Some writers thought it was the laziness of the poor which was at the root of the trouble.

They advocated severe deterrents, the suppression of private alms-giving, and the erection of poor-houses in which the lazy could be forced to work. Public doles and private charity, they said, encourage idleness and raise the price of labour.

Even if the workhouse does not pay for itself, it will increase the wealth of the nation by producing goods; by keeping wages low, it will enable merchants to compete at an advantage in foreign markets.³ These ideas, based on the belief that the poor were responsible for their own poverty, won out in the next century. But in the Restoration there were still important thinkers who saw that unemployment was the great cause of poverty, beside which laziness and viciousness were only drops in the bucket.

These thinkers looked to an improvement of trade as the principal means of helping the poor. To establish new-industries and revive old ones they, too, advocated work houses which they thought could be run at a profit like

¹ Webb, Sydney and Beatrice, *The Old Poor Law*, chs. iv, v; Marshall, Dorothy, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century*, chs. v, vi.

² Clark, *Later Stuarts*, p. 52.

³ Gregory, in *Economica*, vol. i, no. 1, pp. 41 ff.; Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, ii. 164, 297.

an ordinary factory. Ultimately their ventures failed, partly through bad management, partly for economic reasons.

But in the latter half of the seventeenth century they still believed in providing work for the unemployed; and however unpractical their proposals were, at least these men did not make the mistake of blaming the unemployed for their predicament. Sir Matthew Hale, Sir Josiah Child, and Charles Davenant all thought that lack of work at living wages was at least one of the causes of poverty. They were of the opinion that deterrents were unnecessary if only men were given the opportunity of working.¹

Probably the leading exponent of giving the willing poor employment in workhouses was Thomas Firmin. A successful mercer of London, he became a Unitarian, though he retained the friendship of important Anglican and Nonconformist clergymen. Besides building a storage-house which was filled with grain and coal to be sold to the poor at cost in times of high prices, he set up a workhouse in 1676. At one time he apparently employed 1,700 persons in manufacturing linen. Later he attempted the manufacture of wool. Unsuccessful in his efforts to make his workhouses profitable, he supported them for some years from his own pocket and by begging. He paid special attention to children, hiring them from the age of three, and teaching them reading for two hours each day. The hours were long and the wages were low—twopence per day for children and sixpence for adults. How these children could hope to obtain tolerable employment in private industry which was not subsidized by charity is hard to see, but Firmin hoped they would be able to maintain themselves after he had trained them. He confidently proposed that every parish should establish similar institutions, providing work and disciplining the lazy and their children. Yet he did not make the mistake of thinking that all the poor were shiftless by nature.

‘There are many thousands whose necessities are very great and yet they do what they can to live by their own honest labour to keep themselves, and many times would do more than they do, but for want of employment, several that I now have working to me do spin some

¹ Marshall, *English Poor*, Introduction; Webbs, *Old Poor Law*, ch. iii.

fourteen, some sixteen hours in twenty-four, and had much rather do so than be idle.¹

Such, in brief outline, were the endeavours of the state and leading private philanthropists to deal with the problem of the able-bodied poor. How did clergymen face the same problem?

To begin with, they had very little to say about the activity of the state. Towerson mentioned, in passing, that the prince had the power to tax in order to keep his subjects from starving; Bury approved of the Act of Settlement as a punishment for the idle; the whip and bridewell are meet for sturdy beggars, said Gouge and Ford; and Conant appealed to the municipal government of Northampton to prevent children from growing up as vagrants.² No one attacked the policy of the government, and no one proffered constructive criticisms. Poor laws were accepted, with an occasional word of praise.

'It cannot be denied that we have very good laws for the maintenance of the poor, who are made so by the hand of heaven, either by sickness, or lameness, or children, or fire, etc., and the voluntary poor who may help themselves but will not, being idle, dissolute, and slothful persons. These deserve rather the hand of justice to punish them than that of charity to relieve them. . . .'³

Stillington proceeded to point out that though there were good laws, they were not perfectly executed, and could not cover all cases. There was still room, he said, for private charity; men should not excuse themselves by saying that alms only encouraged the dissolute in places where there was state aid for the deserving. He quoted from Firmin's *Proposals for the Employment of the Poor* to prove that many hundreds had died of want in spite of the laws and work-houses.

¹ Quoted from Marshall, *English Poor*, p. 28; for Firmin see Bebb, *Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life*, 1935, pp. 130-2; Webbs, *Old Poor Law*, pp. 106-7; D.N.B.; and Firmin's own pamphlet, *Some Proposals for the Employment of the Poor and for the prevention of idleness and consequence thereof begging* (1678).

² *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, pt. vi; Bury, *Husband-mans Companion*, pp. 285-9; Gouge, *Surest and Safest Way of Thriving*, p. 158; Ford, *The Blessednesse of Being Bountifull*, p. 84; Conant, *Sermon I in Sermons*, v. 24-5.

³ *Of Protestant Charity in Works*, i. 309 (1681).

In fact, the duty to give alms could never be discharged by paying poor rates. 'The true charity of Christians is a free and voluntary thing, not what men are forced to do by the laws.'¹

Baxter wrote that tithes were not to be considered part of a man's charity, because they were not voluntary, and also because present purchasers had paid less for land encumbered with tithe charges.² According to Protestant theory the essence of charity was that it should be voluntary. Otherwise it was not charity, the giver could claim no reward, and the inevitability of the maxim that 'in human courts the poor can have no action against the rich for want of charity to them' would be destroyed.³ For these reasons, and because it was impolitic for clergymen to interfere with the mysteries of state, little was said about the public efforts to deal with poverty, or about the popular panacea, the workhouse.

An intelligent plan of private philanthropy would have to be based upon a correct analysis of the causes of poverty. But clergymen, for all their emphasis upon private charity and prudence in giving, made little attempt to examine these causes, or even to form a definite opinion about them.

Those men who approved of deterrent laws undoubtedly thought that some of the poor, at least, were indolent and vicious. Ford, in particular, said that few men were unable to keep themselves if they would.⁴ Bury, however, wrote that not all the poor were idle drones: lack of relief and employment, high prices and low wages, gave many persons no other choice than to turn beggars.⁵ Likewise Gouge, who spoke very sharply of men who would not work,⁶ did not think that all the poor were lazy. Before he was ejected in 1662 he employed the poor of his parish of St. Sepulchre's in making cloth, subsidizing the work from his private means. Both he and Stillingfleet were friends of Thomas Firmin, and it is possible that the latter derived his interest in employing the poor from Gouge's experiment.⁷

The author of the *Weavers Pocket Book*, John Collinges,

¹ *Of Protestant Charity in Works*, i. 310-11.

² *Christian Directory*, iv. 196.

³ Tillotson, *Sermon XXXVII in Works*, i. 273.

⁴ *The Blessedness of Being Bountifull*, p. 79.

⁵ *Husbandmans Companion*, p. 288.

⁶ *Sermon of Good Works*, p. 595.

⁷ *D.N.B.*, articles on Gouge and Firmin.

was the least merciful in his judgement of paupers. Poverty, he wrote, is not the effect of unemployment: England has trade enough to engage every one. The real cause is the laxity of inferior officers in disciplining beggars, forcing them to work, and preventing children being brought up in idleness.¹ Isaac Barrow agreed that laziness was at the bottom of most poverty. 'Why is any man a beggar, why contemptible, why ignorant, why vitious, why miserable? why, but for this one reason, because he is slothful, because he will not labour to rid himself of those evils?'² With some rhetorical ingenuity Robert South arrived at much the same conclusion. He began a sermon by saying that it was possible for a poor man to abound in evil. Farther on, he said that 'poverty very frequently is the direct effect and consequent of sin and vice'. Finally, he concluded that 'poverty is usually the effect of sin, but always a temptation to it'. As a general principle in moral theory, the poor, wrote Tower-son, are entitled to steal to save their own lives. He added, however, that the occasion did not arise in England, where laws and charitable persons prevented starvation, and where poverty was generally the result of sloth.³

Other men, however, were less harsh. Tillotson and Sprat recognized the decay of trade as one reason for the number of paupers.⁴ Kidder added that the poor were troubled with a multitude of children.⁵ Many penniless persons, said Conant, are industrious and godly; some rise early, work all day, and go to bed late, 'a very commendable thing in them, and greatly to be encouraged . . .'.⁶ To accuse the indigent of laziness as an excuse for not giving alms, wrote Clarke, is slander.⁷ Almost revolutionary from a bourgeois point of view was the blunt statement of Benjamin Baxter that riches were not the reward of virtue, nor poverty the punishment for sin.⁸ But Lady Poverty no longer sat in the seat of honour which had been hers in medieval days.

¹ p. 56.

² *Of Industry*, p. 83.

³ *Sermon I*, pp. 3, 4, 5, in *Sermons*, i; *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, pt. iii.

⁴ Tillotson, *Sermon XLVI* in *Works*, i. 323; Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, pp. 400-2.

⁵ *Sermon IV* in *Sermons*, i. 204.

⁶ *Charity Directed*, p. 4.

⁷ *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. 26.

⁸ *A Posing Question*, ch. ii (1661).

Upon such haphazard and incomplete judgements of the causes of poverty, divines were unable to construct a policy for dealing with the able-bodied poor.

Clerical thought on the subject of charity was not profound. Ministers, it is true, did keep the subject alive in men's minds, and generated paternal feelings of pity towards the sick and the disabled. They perpetuated the traditional Christian teaching that individual souls were valuable and ought not to be allowed to perish uselessly, although they often interpreted this to mean saving the souls of the heathen from damnation as well as the bodies of Englishmen from starvation.

Perhaps the greatest successes were the educational charities; but even here we must remember that charity schools were makeshifts for the universal elementary education which had been projected before the Restoration. The Established Church was foremost in stifling a movement which would have given the power of knowledge to the lower classes.

In fact, the struggle of class against class exercised considerable influence on the thought which was concerned with charity. *Esprit de corps* prompted Tillotson to preach that we ought especially to maintain gentle-folk who had fallen on evil days: brother must help brother. The appeal to the fear of social revolution was at least realistic, if not moral. But if the growing-pains of social evolution were soothed by giving crumbs to potential reformers, one result was that England retained many vulgar and childish anachronisms.¹ Again, the promises of temporal rewards for the bountiful show traces of a consciousness of social war. From one point of view these promises were assurances to the rich that they would not lose a round in the fight by giving some quarter to the enemy.

Some divines accepted the comfortable prejudice that the poor were responsible for their own misery, an opinion which gained in popularity as the spirit of *laissez-faire* grew. This view conflicted with the maxim that the rich and the poor were part of God's Providence; but the problem of the

¹ See the Webbs, *Old Poor Law*, pp. 404-5, for some opinions concerning the poor laws and social revolution.

responsibility of the individual in a world governed by divine will was not one to embarrass a Calvinist theologian. It is not true, however, to say that all Christian leaders had accepted this opinion after 1660.¹ Prominent clergymen still talked of unemployment. Yet they did not make a comprehensive and decisive analysis of the causes of poverty, and consequently they could offer no intelligent plan of reform.

In regard to the policy of the state, ministers had plainly abandoned the role of critics.

If divines had not yet learned to make the fatal distinction between charity and justice, their ignorance was of no service to them, for they did not insist that this particular justice should be enforced, like any other, by the king's authority. Charity was apparently a special kind of justice to be enforced only by the will of the individual, not by the collective wills.²

Yet even the individual was not provided with a definite plan for giving. Certain special charities were recommended; raising wages or lowering rents no doubt would have helped the majority of the poor. But the latter was not a practicable solution, and in fact had little success, as divines would surely have admitted. Beyond this they had nothing to suggest. The most active opinion of the day was considering the value of workhouses, either as places of forced labour for the lazy, or as opportunities for the willing. Here, again, clergymen seemed to have almost no ideas. Although they appealed over and over again for alms, their appeal was of little value: in the face of the greatest single problem in regard to poverty, namely unemployment, divines proposed no policy, and suggested no solution. At most, their insistence on the virtue of industry, combined with that of prudence—choosing the best means to an end—encouraged other men to think seriously about poor relief.³

¹ Cf. Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 271; and Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, p. 314.

² Writing about 1708, Bishop Burnet advocated the abolition of state aid for those able to work. Private charity was more successful, he said, in preventing sloth; *History of His Own Time*, vi. 213-14.

³ Webb's, *Old Poor Law*, p. 408.

IV THE POOR

Blessed are the meek

THE duties of the poor in general were the same as those of servants and farmers. To the rich, divines preached of charity as necessary to stave off social revolution; to the poor, they preached of submissiveness, work, and patience. Discontent is 'destructive to propriety as well as society'.¹ All the familiar arguments in favour of a social hierarchy were used to keep the poor in harness.

The poor 'think that they are the maintainers of the common-wealth, and the rich are the caterpillars of it, that live upon their labours like drones in the hive, or mice and vermine that eat the honey, which the poor labouring bees have long been gathering. For they are unacquainted with the labours and cares of their governors.'² But none of these arguments were so powerful as those drawn from the principles of religion.

Let the poor know, clergymen preached again and again, that God has put them in their predicament. For by the direction of Divine Providence are men given much or little.³

The man who is poor has been made so by mercy and love, and he may assume that his poverty is a blessing.⁴

The murmurer and the grumbler are ingrates who commit the sin of passing judgement on God Himself.⁵ They do not acknowledge that even the most miserable human being has more than he deserves.⁶

As a specialist in giving religious advice to the poor, the Nonconformist minister, John Flavel, contributed several comforting thoughts. God has afflicted many better men before, he said, and He could plague us more now. If our

¹ Adams, Thomas, *The Main Principles of the Christian Religion*, p. 135 (1675).

² Baxter, *Christian Directory*, iv. 17.

³ *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 166.

⁴ Barrow, *Of Contentment in Works*, iii. 6-10; Baxter, *Obedient Patience in Works*, ix. 40; Swinnoek, *The Christian-mans Calling*, pt. ii, ch. ix.

⁵ Baxter, *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, p. 56.

⁶ Jacombe, Thomas, *Sermon XXVI in Morning Exercises*, ii. 64; *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 168.

state is wretched, it will be better shortly, for the poor are not left without promises. Is it reasonable to distrust a God who is an all loving father?¹

Every one agreed that the answer to Flavel's question was a negative. Thinking more of their mercies than their troubles, avoiding the temptations of poverty, the poor should strive to be humble and contented.²

Either because belief in it has waned, or because it is no longer thought to be a proper consideration in elaborating moral theory, a life beyond death is not often mentioned by modern moralists. But in the seventeenth century a very large proportion of the population had an active belief in the rewards of heaven and the punishments of hell. Clergymen willingly accepted immortality as a fact to be reckoned with in persuading men to live the good life. A belief in a future existence was the foundation stone of the Church. As an encouragement to charity, and to being submissive under oppression, it had important social consequences.

Misery on this earth and the injustices of men make a future life indispensable, reflected Joseph Glanvill.³ Order and government, wrote Stephen Charnock, would be impossible without a belief in a God whose Providence will some day right all wrongs, punishing the evil and rewarding the just. Counselling the poor to await their reward after death, he added that we should have little reason to believe in Divine Providence if we did not know that there was a life beyond this.⁴

Accepting the fact of immortality, clergymen were never loath to use it as an argument in teaching the poor the duty of being submissive.

If poor in lands, they taught, be rich in faith and humility in order to win an estate hereafter.⁵

¹ *A Saint Indeed: or, the Great Works of a Christian Opened and Pressed*, pp. 89-102 (1671).

² Conant, John, *Sermon V* in *Sermons*, i. 253-5; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, pt. ii, ch. xvii; Stillingfleet, *Sermon* preached before the House of Commons, in *Works*, i. 63-4; Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xvi; Bates, William, *The Great Duty of Resignation* (1684) in *Works*, 1700.

³ *Seasonable Reflections and Discourses, Sermon III* (1676).

⁴ *Discourse on the Existence and Attributes of God*, p. 173, and *Discourse of Divine Providence*, p. 37, both in *Works*, i.

⁵ Conant, *ibid.*, i. 255; Jacombe, *Sermon XXVI* in *Morning Exercises*, ii. 65;

'Be often thinking of the joys laid up for thee in heaven; look upon that as thy home, on this world as an inn, where thou art fain to take up in thy passage. And then, as a traveller expects not the same conveniences at an inn that he hath at home, so thou hast reason to be content with whatever entertainment thou findest here, knowing thou art upon thy journey to a place of infinite happiness, which will make an abundant amends for all the uneasiness and hardship thou canst suffer in the way.'¹

Baxter recapitulated the arguments. All holiness, he wrote, depends upon the belief in heaven and hell, without which anarchy would prevail on earth.² The two volumes of funeral sermons from his pen illustrate the contempt which he had for the miseries of this world, compared with the joys, or the torments, of the next.³ In the *Life of Faith* he listed the Scriptural promises given to the indigent and the oppressed;⁴ in the *Christian Directory* he taught that riches hereafter would be the reward of the humble, but that the insolent poor must suffer both now and later. No man is saved merely because he starves.⁵

Nevertheless, the poor were the especial children of God. Born of poor parents, Christ chose men of little or no wealth to be his disciples, and he remains the advocate of the oppressed.⁶ Having no worldly interest to lose, welcoming the promises of happiness in heaven, being meek and humble, 'a disposition of mind suitable to their outward condition', the poor accepted the message of Jesus; the rich 'were in so comfortable a condition at present that they were not much concerned what should become of them hereafter . . .'.⁷ The very fact that a man is poor frees him from many of those temptations which make it so difficult for the rich to reach the heavenly mansions reserved for the just: the riches of

Steele, *Husbandmans Calling*, ch. x. Steele is especially insistent on the wisdom of acquiescing in poverty in the hopes of future reward.

¹ *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 168.

² *A Breviate of the Life of Margaret . . . Wife of Richard Baxter*, p. 95; *A Saint or a Brute* in *Works*, x. 164-73. Chapter iii of the latter work contains some extremely foolish arguments in favour of the doctrine of immortality.

³ *Practical Works*, vols. xvii and xviii.

⁴ pp. 266-87, in *Works*, vol. xii.

⁵ Pt. ii, ch. xxvii.

⁶ Jacombe, *ibid.*, ii. 65; Bunyan, *The Work of Jesus Christ as an Advocate* in *Works*, vol. i (1688); Baxter, *Obedient Patience*, p. 407.

⁷ Tillotson, *Sermon LXIII* in *Works*, i. 452-3.

God's mercy are often conspicuous in the poverty of His beloved.¹

Robert South and Isaac Barrow thought that the humble might be happier than the powerful, even in this life. Poverty makes men healthier, and it 'yieldeth disposition of mind, freedom and leisure to attend the study of truth, the acquist of virtue'.² In the house of the labouring man are no pills and medicines, the sun and the fresh air are his doctors, and he neither speaks nor lives like a Frenchman. Poverty has produced the most famous commanders, the most successful business men, the most expert statesmen, and the greatest philosophers.³ Baxter agreed that the rich were less healthy than the poor.⁴ Furthermore, the possession of wealth brings troublesome obligations, the servant problem, danger of thieves, and discontent in general—the rich man thinks he never has enough for his needs.⁵

But the troubles of the rich on earth were as nothing compared to the peril they faced of losing their souls to the devil. In the Middle Ages the danger of riches was a stock theme for preachers. It continued to be so in the seventeenth century, though men of substance, perhaps, were not so willing to hear of their predicament as they had been in former centuries: Thomas Cartwright was accused of libelling honest citizens when he preached before the Lord Mayor a sermon entitled *The Danger of Riches*.⁶ Taking as his text the words from Matthew: 'It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven,' he said that a camel was not a kind of rope, nor the needle a narrow gate in Jerusalem, as some expositors pretended. Nor had Christ spoken in hyperbole. The mere possession of riches makes the passage difficult, while love of wealth makes it impossible. If some rich men do go to heaven, it is because God can work miracles. For wealth

¹ South, *Sermon in Sermons*, ii. 383 (1678).

² Barrow, *The Duty and Reward of Bounty to the Poor in Works*, i. 54-5; *Of Contentment in Works*, iii. 45-6.

³ South, *Sermon I in Sermons*, ii. 31-2 (1667); *Sermon II*, iii. 70.

⁴ *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, p. 58; Tillotson, *Sermon XXXVII in Works*, i. 266.

⁵ *Christian Directory*, i. 290; *Obedient Patience*, p. 407; *Jacombe, Sermon XXVI in Morning Exercises*, ii. 567; Charnock, *Discourse of Divine Providence*, pp. 32 ff.

⁶ *Epistle Dedicatory* (1662).

begets desire of more wealth, leads men to forget they are stewards, and encourages them to trust in things rather than in God. Even for those men who have acquired their wealth honestly, danger lurks in every penny.

Prosperity, wrote South, 'has a peculiar force and fitness to abate mens virtues . . .'. The foolish or the vicious are ignorant or regardless of the uses for wealth which religion prescribes.¹ So long as rich men rule the world, Baxter prophesied, we must not expect a golden age: property is too great a temptation for most men.² Anglicans and Non-conformists united in warning the rich and comforting the poor with thoughts of the difficulties which beset the man of property in his struggle for eternal salvation.³ The same platitudes resounded from every pulpit in England, and they were available in print on every book stall.

From another point of view, however, poverty was a less happy state, and riches had some positive advantages even for the souls of men. For the poor, too, had many temptations to overcome.

Baxter, as was seen above, lamented that agricultural workers had so little time or opportunity to learn of religion. 'When there is a family to provide for, a discontented wife and children to satisfy, rents and debts, and demands unpaid, it must be an excellent Christian that can live contentedly. . . .'⁴ Want, wrote Towerson, enfeebles the mind, making virtuous action difficult and vice easy.⁵ Because he saw the hand of Providence in all his sufferings, Epictetus is to be admired; but, added Tillotson, 'I confess it doth not move me to hear Seneca, who flowed with wealth and lived at ease, to talk magnificently and to slight poverty and pain as not worthy the name of evil and trouble. . . .'⁶

Riches, though dangerous, were still a good. Just as God made men poor for the sake of their souls, so He made them

¹ *Sermon II* in *Sermons*, iv. 63 ff. (1693).

² *Reliquiae*, i. 233.

³ *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 166; *Christian Directory*, ii. 631 ff.; Bates, William, *The Danger of Prosperity* in *Works* (1685); Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xvi; Swinnock, *Christian-mans Calling*, ch. viii.

⁴ *How to Do Good to Many* in *Works*, xvii. 303.

⁵ *Explication of the Lord's Prayer*, pp. 125-6.

⁶ *Sermon LXXXV* in *Works*, i. 636.

rich too: 'the blessing of the Lord is that which maketh rich.'¹ To covet or love the things of the world, to use them for sensual ends, is to sin; but wealth may be desired in order to serve God: hence it is not to be despised or cast off.² In the Scriptures we learn that the love of riches is the root of all evil; but we also learn there how to use riches, lest we be tempted to prefer a state of poverty.³ A man may even go so far as to love worldly goods, so long as he loves the things of God at a higher rate;⁴ and although it is forbidden to pray for them directly, we may ask to be given lands and money as a means to a greater end, the glory of God on earth.⁵

The question of what advantages and disadvantages accompanied the possession of great wealth arose particularly in the case of the Church. During the Interregnum attempts had been made to raise the economic status of the poorer ministers by distributing the revenues of the richest livings, especially those which had formerly belonged to the bishops and the cathedral chapters. At the Restoration these revenues were returned to their former owners or their successors. Consequently, some clergymen enjoyed princely incomes, while others had barely the means of subsistence. The inequality of incomes was increased by the fact that the bishops collected fines from their tenants for all the leases which had fallen in since the abolition of episcopacy. Burnet thought that about £1,500,000 had come into the bishops' pockets in this way, and he recorded his opinion that the money should have been taken from them and given to the poorer clergy.⁶ The Nonconformist, John Humfrey, wrote that the bishops were generally censured for their conduct in this matter.⁷ An anonymous pamphleteer who wished to see episcopacy abolished accused the bishops of racking rents, or selling new leases to the highest bidder.⁸ Defend-

¹ *Explication of the Lord's Prayer*, p. 126; Gouge, *Christian Directions*, ch. xv; Barrow, *Of Industry*, pp. 21-2; Oakes, John, *Sermon XVII in Morning Exercises*, iii. 399-401.

² *Christian Directory*, i. 254-5; Tillotson, *Sermon XV in Works*, i. 111-12 (1686 ?).

³ Gouge, *A Sermon of Good Works*, pp. 570-1.

⁴ Tillotson, *Sermon XXXVI in Works*, i. 253.

⁵ *Christian Directory*, ii. 628; Baxter, Benjamin, *A Posing Question*, ch. v.

⁶ *History of His Own Time* (Airy's edition), i. 329-30.

⁷ *A Proposition for the Safety and Happiness of the King and Kingdom*, pp. 47-8.

⁸ *Omnia Comesta a Belo, or, An Answer out of the West to a question out of the North*,

ing the lords spiritual, Thomas Tomkins argued that it was sacrilege to meddle with Church funds. Besides, he said, the money had gone to sure friends of the king who deserved to be rewarded for their loyalty. Much of it, in his opinion, had been given in charity, or in grants to the government, and Church tenants had low rents compared with other farmers.¹

Every one agreed that the clergy ought to be decently supported, whether by tithes, endowments, or voluntary contributions, and every one lamented the plight of the poorest incumbents. Whether the situation was to be remedied by increasing the revenues of the Church, or by levelling out the existing revenues, whether, in fact, any minister of God ought to have great wealth at all, were questions hotly debated by Anglicans and Nonconformists. They were also questions which had been definitely answered so far as the Anglican Church was concerned: clerical incomes were not to be redistributed, and poor clergymen were to look to the bounty of the pious for relief.

Baxter was one of those who retained the Puritan aversion to a wealthy clergy. In his autobiography he accused the Laudian bishops of supporting the tyranny of Charles I because they were afraid of losing their riches.² His success at Kidderminster, he recorded, was partly due to his remitting the tithes owed by the poor, and to his giving away those owed by the rich which he could have collected only by suing in the courts.³ Thus he demonstrated to his parishioners that he was not a worldly man. Wealthy prelates, in love with the world, will drive out religion rather than endanger their revenues.⁴ The eagerness with which some Anglicans defended their incomes lent some colour to Baxter's accusation. South, as we saw above, found many advantages in being poor when he was preaching the duty of resignation; but he was bitterly opposed to stripping the priestly office of its regal splendour. To make a minister, as the title implies, a servant, would make him ridiculous. 'The poor man's

wherein the earth is opened, and the napkin found, in which the trading talent of the nation hath been tyed up and lyen hid for some years passed. . . , p. 10 (1667).

¹ *The Inconveniencies of Toleration*, pp. 18-19 (1667).

² *Reliquiae*, i. 32-3, 42-3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

⁴ *Paraphrase on the New Testament*, Acts xix. 27 (1685).

wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. We may believe it upon Solomon's word, who was rich as well as wise . . .; and probably, had it not been for his riches, the Queen of Sheba would not have come so far only to have heard his wisdom.¹ Other clergymen were equally quick to defend the tithes and endowments of the Church;² none asked that the largest incomes be divided among the poor clerks. Thomas Cartwright warned ministers to be charitable, not because their souls might be endangered by too much wealth, but because they might suffer from the malicious envy of the less fortunate laity.³

Urging the Established Church to let down the bars which kept out Dissenters, John Corbet assured the clergy that they had nothing to fear from such moderation except that a few of the richest might be asked to share some of their wealth with the poorest.⁴ The reply to his moderate exception, possibly written by a clergyman, was not encouraging. Corbet and the Dissenters in general were accused of coveting Anglican benefices.⁵

The most effective attack on the conservative financial arrangements of the Church was Vincent Alsop's reply to John Goodman. The latter lamented that so many towns were insufficiently stocked with well-paid ministers: Dissenters were increasing in the corporations, he thought, and loyal ministers had to depend upon the charity of their parishioners, thus losing their independence. He hoped that Parliament might find the funds necessary to endow new livings.⁶ Such a proposal touched the Dissenters on a tender spot, for as tax-payers they would have to bear part of the burden. 'If the clergy could but once procure a revenue settled hard and fast upon them to their minds . . .,' retorted Alsop, 'had they but more wealth to support their grandeur

¹ *Sermon* preached at Lincoln's Inn, in *Sermons*, i. 143-4, 153-5.

² *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 46-7; *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, p. 227; Thomas Comber's *Historical Vindication of the Divine Right of Tithes*, a refutation of Selden, was the best of several works defending these revenues (1682).

³ *The Danger of Riches*, p. 32.

⁴ *A Discourse of the Religion of England*, p. 46 (1667).

⁵ *Dolus an Virtus? or, An answer to a seditious discourse concerning the Religion of England* (1668).

⁶ *A Serious and Compassionate Inquiry into the causes of the present neglect and contempt of the Protestant Religion and Church of England*, pp. 37-40 (1674).

out of the hard labour of the poor drudging moyls that tug hard night and day to get their bread', all might go well. Like papists, Anglicans will never be satisfied until they own all of England. Why should lean benefices be increased, instead of fat ones divided up? Why is it not possible to take the revenues of rich country parishes to maintain the clergy in the town? Rich ministers beg for their poor brethren, but give nothing themselves. Furthermore, is it not wise that the clergy should depend upon the laity as a guard against clericalism? Better to guarantee ministers a minimum, 'and leave them to stand upon their good behaviour for superfluities . . .'.¹

Varying according to the purpose of the argument, religious teaching about the relative advantages of poverty and riches was not of a piece. To convince the poor that contentedness was a virtue, to persuade the rich to give alms, the poor were called the especially blessed children of God and poverty was praised. On the other hand, the indigent had to be warned of the temptations of their state; and the rich wanted assurance that inequality of fortune was not an evil. For this purpose poverty was represented as less attractive, and the advantages of wealth made to appear greater by contrast.

To allay the dangers of open warfare between classes, whether by persuading the poor to be submissive, or inducing the rich to be charitable, or both, and at the same time to preserve the essentials of the existing social and economic arrangement, clergymen had to steer a middle course between emphasizing and slighting the value of worldly goods.

Much of this teaching was traditional Christian doctrine inherited from the Middle Ages. Schoolmen, too, had spoken of the blessings of being poor and the peril of being

¹ *Melius Inquirendum, or a Sober Inquiry into the Reasonings of the Serious Inquiry*, pp. 107-10 (3rd ed., 1681).

That the problem of poor livings in towns was a real one we may judge from a letter of Sheldon's to Richard Allestree, Provost of Eton, who had the gift of the vicarage of Modbury, Devon. Choose carefully, advised Sheldon, for it is a poor benefice in a market town, and 'the best of the ministers subsistence will be according as he shall by his abilities and discretion make himselfe agreeable to the place'. Add MS. C. 308, f. 116 a and b [Bodleian].

rich. And they had also defended wealth as a good,¹ recognizing the evils of want. So trite was most of this preaching that Baxter, speaking to the poor, was carried away by convention and habit into warning them not to trust in their wealth and possessions.² Hopes of heaven, and fears of hell, too, were common medieval emotions. How useful they were in humbling the revolutionary ardour of the oppressed, or stimulating the rich to share their wealth is difficult to determine. There were revolutions and revolts in the Middle Ages; some of the most pious men in England applauded when Cromwell cut off a king's head; and charitable men were not always the most religious. Nevertheless, the effect of much of the doctrine expounded for the benefit of the poor must have been that of a drug. Not the less so because the men who did the preaching were sincerely convinced of the truth of these beliefs: clergymen could easily combine fear of social violence with a genuine concern for the souls of the poor. Unselfishness and sincerity served to increase their moral authority and make easier the suppression of revolutionary ideas and actions.

In so far as ideas regarding the duties of the poor were derived from medieval thinkers, they were based on a vision of social harmony combined with social inequality. Rich and poor were as fathers and children, both necessary for society, both having definite functions. Their duties toward one another were summed up by John Scott, Canon of St. Paul's, in two rules: inferiors should be modest toward superiors, and superiors be 'very treatable and condescending to all that are inferior'.³ To despise a man for being poor, or to be contemptuous of the rich, would be an impious reflection upon Divine Providence.⁴ Such a patriarchal attitude persisted, especially among Anglican social thinkers—they emphasized the blessings of poverty, at the same time defending the aristocratic inequalities which were traditional

¹ Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 31.

² *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 303.

³ *The Christian Life in Works*, i. 130 (1681-6).

⁴ This attitude persisted into the nineteenth century. See George Offor's Preface to vol. i of Bunyan's *Works*, p. vii. A later editor thought it necessary to prove that Bunyan was not so poor as he himself had said: Introduction to *Grace Abounding*, ed. John Brown, 1888.

in the Church. But apart from ecclesiastical affairs, Nonconformists also often maintained a conservative and patriarchal position towards the poor which was useful for preserving important remnants of medieval society, and for effecting a relatively peaceful revolution from feudal to bourgeois and capitalist society.¹

In part, the distrust of wealth is to be connected with the ascetic ideals of Protestantism. For the good Protestant the struggle was to remain an ascetic in the midst of worldly activity, spending little on himself, but working hard to get more. Rich and poor alike could work, and deny the flesh, so that in theory it made little difference whether a man were penniless or wealthy. Again and again divines, especially Nonconformists, emphasized the fact that worldly goods were of no real importance in man's life. To be high or low is all one to the godly.² Nevertheless, in practice men of great wealth, clergy and laity, were likely to be less industrious, more in love with luxury. Consequently, the idle rich who lived in style on inherited wealth were attacked over and over again by the clergy, more particularly by dissenting divines. Men who worked hard for their fortunes, saving and scraping, escaped this condemnation, as we shall see in a later chapter. In effect, Nonconformists were favouring men of business and slighting those gentlemen who still thought it vulgar to be thrifty or to take seriously the duty of work.

On the other hand, it was often the Nonconformists who saw most disadvantages in being poor. Begging, which had been glorified by the medieval Church, was repugnant to many Puritans.³ Beggars, said Gouge, are robbers, outcasts from society, and mere animals.⁴ Henry Lukin and Richard Steele condemned the begging friars of the Church of Rome as idle rogues.⁵ Although the poor were still occasionally

¹ Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, ii. 166-7.

² Annesley, Samuel, *Sermon I in Morning Exercises*, iii. 8-10; Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*, pp. 46-7; Baxter, *The Crucifying of the World*, p. 377; Tillotson, *Sermon LXXIII in Sermons*, i. 543.

³ Weber, Max, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, 1930, pp. 178-9.

⁴ *A Sermon of Good Works in Works*, p. 595; also Baxter, *Christian Directory*, ii.

547.

⁵ Lukin, *The Chief Interest of Man*, p. 40; Steele, *Tradesman's Calling*, ch. ii; also Ford, *The Blessednesse of Being Bountifull*, p. 84; and Baxter, *The Crucifying of the World*, p. 348.

looked upon as the special children of God, they were not thought to be the best Christians. Poverty was always likely to be an indication of laziness; and in reality, the poor, having little time or opportunity to learn, did not seem to take to religion so readily as other men. Consequently, a middle state without the temptations of want or of luxury was often thought to be the best.¹ Following the example of Agur (Prov. ch. xxx), the wise man should pray for a moderate estate.² Baxter recorded that his father had a freeholder's estate, free from the temptations of poverty and of riches.³ Frugal, industrious, and pious, the middle class of men, whether independent farmers, craftsmen, shopkeepers, or merchants, were, in the opinion of the dissenting clergy, the best class in the community. At this point the divergence between Anglican and Nonconformist social thought, never very great, becomes wider.

¹ Steele, *Husbandmans Calling*, ch. iii; Jacombe, *Sermon XXVI* in *Morning Exercises*, iii. 401.

² Baxter, Benjamin, *A Posing Question*, p. 54. Bates, *The Sure Trial of Uprightness* in *Works*, p. 372; Bunyan, *The Saints' Privilege and Profit*, *Works*, i. 677; Tillotson, *Sermon XXXVII* in *Works*, i. 259; Baxter, *MS. Treatises IV*, p. 54 [Dr. Williams's Library]; Flavell, John, *Husbandry Spiritualized*, i, ch. iv.

³ *Reliquiae*, pt. i, p. 1.

V

CITIZENS AND THE MIDDLE SORT OF MEN

FREEHOLDERS and trades-men are the strength of religion and civility in the land: and gentlemen and beggars, and servile tenants, are the strength of iniquity. . . .¹ Baxter had arrived at this conclusion from experience and observation. Himself the son of a freeholder, he began his preaching at Dudley in Worcestershire. A part of his success there he attributed to the fact that the country was thickly settled by iron-workers, so that it was almost a continuous village. On the other hand, at Bridgnorth in Shropshire he had many difficulties, 'the town having no general trade to employ the inhabitants in which is the undoing of great towns . . .'.² The happiest situation was that which existed in Kidderminster. As weavers, men, women, and children could all find employment and gain a living, so that there were few beggars; besides, rich men were rare, and master weavers lived but little better than their journeymen. Only three or four of the magistrates had been able to get £500 or £600 in all in twenty years, some had about £40 a year, and the majority much less. Weaving permitted families to talk of religion as they worked, or read books as they stood at the loom. Civility and piety were encouraged by constant connexions with London, as is usual among tradesmen, whereas ploughmen 'are so wearied or continually employed, either in the labours or the cares of their callings, that it is a great impediment to their salvation . . .'.³

From the point of view of economic usefulness, farmers were considered by Baxter as the most important men in England;⁴ but he did not think them the most religious. We

¹ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, i. 89. Baxter used the word tradesmen as including all men with a trade. The word trade also had a much wider significance than at present: it often included all kinds of economic activity apart from agriculture. John Corbet called the 'trading part of the people' all those who were not paupers, professional men, or genteel owners of large estates. See *A Discourse of the Religion of England*, p. 23. Mercantilist economists who praised trade sometimes used the word in a broad sense, as denoting all industrial activity as well as the exchange of goods. Cf. Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, ii. 281-2.

² *Reliquiae*, i. 14-15.

³ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, i. 449; *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, p. 27.

have seen what he had to say of their troubles in the *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*. In the same work he pointed out that carpenters, weavers, shoemakers, and other tradesmen had certain wages, lighter work, and more leisure. Even poor iron-workers have sure pay and little worry. Enslaved by landlords, tenants are constrained to follow their owners' vices. In former times this system of slavery made it possible for great lords to lead their dependants in wars against the king. Now farmers are kept in ignorance. 'Among merchants, mercers, drapers, and other corporation-tradesmen, and among weavers, taylors, and such like labourers, yea among poore naylor, and such like, there is usually found more knowledge and religion than among the poore enslaved husbandmen.'¹

If husbandmen were an unfortunate class from the point of view of religion and virtue, their gentlemanly masters, in Baxter's opinion, were not much better off. He was not a leveller, and he respected gentlemen for their rank; but he thought little of their morals. Three kinds of people commit the sin of idleness, he wrote—they are the lazy, beggars, and gentlemen.² Like the children of paupers, the sons of the gentry are undone because they are not made to work.³ It was to the 'sensual gentry' that Baxter dedicated his *Redemption of Time*.⁴

Across the river from Kidderminster lived Sir Ralph Clare, the only rich man of the parish. Baxter's difficulties with him were many, and must have convinced him that even the best of the gentry were more worldly than religious. For Sir Ralph was a good man, interested in the Church, and moderate in his expenses. But he was a staunch and aristocratic Anglican. Throughout the Interregnum he refused to take communion at Baxter's church unless he could kneel, and some members of the parish, perhaps his dependants, followed him in withdrawing from the sacrament. Altogether, said Baxter, he caused more trouble than a multitude of lesser but more sinful men. In the end, he was the principal

¹ pp. 26-7.

² *Treatise of Self-Denial* in *Works*, xi. 199-200.

³ *Christian Directory*, ii. 546.

⁴ *Works*, vol. xiii (1667). Not all gentlemen, of course, were included in the phrase.

agent in turning Baxter out of Kidderminster at the Restoration. His chief sins were pride and love of worldly rank. Not relishing precise religion or extemporary prayers, he wanted a church founded on the Common Prayer 'and also the interest of himself and his civil and ecclesiastical parties . . .'.¹ Sir Ralph may well have been the model for Baxter's character of Sir Elymas Dives. He too wanted a quiet and respectable religion, where mercy is preached, and men are comforted. Hard-working tenants, he thought, who go to church and live in peace ought not to be put in doubt of their salvation, nor taught to abhor the pleasures and habits of the gentry. Puritan logic, however, proved too much for Dives; he had to admit that a man could not be too precise in religion. The alternative was either to turn Puritan or atheist. But like a true gentleman he refused to be caught by logic, and decided to defer his decision until a later day. Meanwhile, he cursed and threatened ministers who spread doctrines which, to his conservative way of thinking, carried seeds of revolution.²

In this description of Sir Elymas, one of the best of his literary efforts, Baxter sketched deftly the clash between the formal and aristocratic religion of many an Anglican gentleman and the tireless intensity of the Puritan tradition. That the latter was more readily accepted by men of lesser rank he had no doubt. He pitied the 'nobility, gentry, and great ones', thought better of the poor town labourers, and hoped for most from those men who had neither riches nor poverty.³ In most places, he wrote, 'there are a sober sort of men of the middle rank, that will hear reason, and are more equal to religion than the highest or lowest usually are'.⁴

Another dissenting minister, Thomas Brooks, spoke of London as the great home of trade, and the city most eminent for religion:⁵ the two were not unconnected. Gentlemen and beggars, wrote Edward Bury, ought to learn the necessary virtue of industry from the ants.⁶ Samuel Shaw

¹ *Reliquiae*, i. 94; ii. 298-301.

² *Poor Man's Family Book in Works*, xix. 355-94 (1674).

³ *Reliquiae*, i. 134.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, iv. 19.

⁵ *London's Lamentations*, ii. 44, 49 (1670).

⁶ *The Husbandmans Companion*, p. 83 (1677).

warned against the sin of pride in birth, common among the gentry.¹ He did not neglect to chastise men of business for dishonesty, but he added a concise statement of the Puritan preference for the industrial and commercial classes. 'Tradesmen are a very substantial and useful part of a nation, and their way of living seems preferable to the living of gentlemen and husbandmen, as requiring more industry than the former, and more ingenuity than the latter.'²

On the other hand, a number of Anglican divines held an opposite opinion. As an example of a simple and pious way of life, South picked that of the poor farmer who worked hard and slept soundly.³ The dangerous intellectualism of precisionists could not infect these men, tired in body and rusty in mind. To them clergymen could apply with success the rules of Jeremy Taylor: let the vulgar listen but not speak; teach them to do good works, labour long, and be quiet.⁴ A full understanding of the subtleties of doctrine were better left to the clergy. Idleness, said the author of the *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, allows men to be too curious, and to delight in new beliefs. 'Hence it is that towns and cities have been the great nurseries of faction, the leisure of shop-men making them more inquisitive after, and receptive of novelties. And were that overgrown zeal of sermons, which has now devour'd all other parts of religion, among that sort of men thoroughly scanned, we should find idleness goes very far in its composition. . . .' If tailors, weavers, and smiths worked harder they would have no time to turn preachers.⁵ In contradiction to this, Richard Steele, the Non-conformist, considered that towns provided more helps for the souls and more innocent pleasures than did the country. Living in a town, he said, was one of the great advantages of being a weaver.⁶

The line between the opinions of Anglicans and Dissenters on the subject of tradesmen was not, however, hard and fast. Isaac Barrow thought well of men of commerce and business,

¹ *The True Christians Test*, i, Meditation LXIV (1682).

² *Ibid.*, ii, Meditation XXI.

³ *Sermon I, Sermons*, ii. 31-2 (1667).

⁴ *Rules and Advices to the Clergy in Works*, i. 106 (1678).

⁵ pp. 398-9.

⁶ *Tradesman's Calling*, ch. v, sect. 5.

and he regarded the long and tedious services of the Church as a defect which alienated men used to dispatch.¹ Looking at England with the detachment of a Scotsman, Burnet observed in the Conclusion of his *History* that the best body in the nation were the tradesmen. On the other hand, Nonconformists still had friends at Court and among the gentry.² Both Baxter and Clarke, for example, had the highest admiration for Sir Matthew Hale.³ The Hon. Robert Boyle was a close friend of Baxter and one of his executors.⁴

To understand exactly the different social preferences of Anglican and Nonconformist, we must examine the answers which they proposed to three questions: what is the value of trade? is it wise to injure trade by punishing Nonconformity? and who began the civil wars?

Among the political arithmeticians of the Restoration, industry and trade, and especially foreign commerce, were counted as the greatest of blessings. By manufacture and exchange the wealth of individuals and the power of the nation, the two great goods, were to be secured and increased. Whereas the exchange of things, since it was non-productive, had been regarded with considerable suspicion in the Middle Ages, trade was now praised as one of the most necessary functions of civilized society. Production, trade, and, in foreign commerce, a favourable balance, were the great aims of mercantilist policy.⁵

If the Church was to remain the national religious institution, it could not stand in opposition to the great aim of national and secular activity; and in fact, many Anglican clergymen had much to say in favour of trade. We have seen that Joseph Glanvill and Robert Neville, defending experimental science and learning, spoke of the advantage to commerce. Languages, navigation, and geography were

¹ *Of the Dissenters in Works*, ix. 578.

² Bebb, *Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life*, ch. iii.

³ Clarke, *The Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons in this Later Age*, 'Sir Matthew Hale' (1683); Baxter, *Additional Notes on the Life and Death of Sir Matthew Hale*, published in the same year [1682] as Burnet's *Life*. Hale was a man admired by all classes.

⁴ Powicke, *The Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross*, p. 48; *Reliquiae*, Dedication. For Baxter's other aristocratic friends, see Powicke.

⁵ Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, ii. 26 ff., 273 ff.

studies on which an efficient merchant marine must rely. Recognizing that war was a necessary instrument for a trading nation, Neville included military studies as helpful to prosperity. Glanvill also referred to the inventions of gunpowder and artillery, not, however, in connexion with commerce, but as aids to the conversion of savages.¹

Stillington praised a merciful God, who 'hath blessed us with such an increase of trade that our merchants far exceed those of Tyre both in riches and number. Our ships of trade are like a valley of cedars when they lie at home; and when they are abroad they compass the earth, and make the riches of the East and West Indies to meet in our streets.'² Preaching in commemoration of the death of the Royal Martyr, he observed that a monarchy is the best government—the interest of prince and people are identical, both being rich or poor together; in a commonwealth, rulers seek their own prosperity in opposition to the welfare of the whole.³ John Fell, who became Dean of Christ Church at the Restoration, used trade as an argument for bringing in a king. Cromwell's dynastic wars, he said, will come to an end, and Charles can help trade by a suitable marriage.⁴ A possible inference from Fell's statement was that commercial wars would take the place of dynastic wars.

From the liberal and latitudinarian Thomas Sprat came the highest praise of business. As we have seen above, he regarded trade as the principal instrument for the formation of civilized society, and for national aggrandizement. To gentlemen who thought of citizens as vulgar men, he retorted that business, not nobility, had brought man from barbarism to civility.⁵

A more qualified approval was that of a Cambridge don, one Edward Kemp. Preaching on the Sunday before the opening of the fair at Stourbridge, he apologized for speaking of unfair practices to merchants, saying that he did not

¹ Glanvill, *Plus Ultra: or, the Progress and Advancement of Knowledge since the Days of Aristotle*, pp. 49–50, 81 (1668); Neville, *The Great Excellency, Usefulness, and Necessity of Humane Learning*, p. 27, above pp. 56–7.

² *Sermon*, preached at St. Margaret's, Westminster, 13 November 1678, in *Works*, vol. i.

³ *Sermon*, 30 January 1669, in *Works*, i. 97.

⁴ *The Interest of England Stated*, p. 9 (1659).

⁵ Above, pp. 116–7.

presume to reprove them until they came to his very doors. And he was careful to add a eulogy: 'I know well that trade conduceth much to the prosperitie of a people. I intend no invective against the industrious managers of it; they are the very life, soul, and spirit of a nation. . . .'¹

Other men were suspicious and hostile. Worldly wisdom is that practical cunning which shows itself in the mystery of a trade or craft.² Between buying and selling, sin sticks, and is interwoven with all trades so that it is a part of them.³ Even Tillotson, who was not a reactionary, thought that unrighteousness was an ingredient in most business.⁴ These statements, however, must not be taken as direct attacks on the callings of craftsmen, merchants, and shopkeepers. For it was quite possible to look upon business as dangerous, and yet to think it an excellent vocation.⁵ Many of the stoutest defenders of buyers and sellers were not unmindful of the sinfulness of individual tradesmen.

It cannot be said, then, that Anglicans were unalterably opposed to the growth of industry and commerce. Nevertheless, they were less favourable to it than some dissenting ministers. Perhaps the best evidence of this disagreement is the debate between John Goodman and Vincent Alsop which we have already referred to in connexion with education, and with the wealth of the clergy.

According to Goodman, it was common knowledge that divisions in the Church and the late civil strife were hatched and nursed up in the corporations and market towns. In those places men have leisure to run after novelties. In country villages men are quiet and peaceable, they apply themselves to earn their bread in sweat, and are too tired to trouble about fashionable controversies. The established order is complied with willingly and by custom.

With much caution, he went on to complain that 'the vast increase of trade doth usually reflect some inconveniencies upon ecclesiastical affairs. . . . It is far from my thoughts to

¹ *A Sermon*, 6 September 1668, p. 3.

² South, *Sermon*, 30 April 1676, *Sermons*, i. 319.

³ *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 254-5.

⁴ *Sermon X in Morning Exercises*, i. 207.

⁵ Beins, Ernst, 'Die Wirtschaftsethik der Calvinistischen Kirche der Niederlande 1565-1650', in *Nederlandsch Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis*, N.S. 24, Afl. 2, 1931.

wish the tide of trade dammed up: for I confess it is hugely advantageous to the publick, as well as to private persons in many respects.' It sharpens the wits by contact with foreign lands, it leads to the discovery of new countries and new works of God and man; both the bond and the instrument of human society, it provides for the needs and delights of all men. Minds and fortunes alike are enlarged by commerce so that any nation is ill bred and barbarous without it. By its means men are inured to hardship and instructed in the arts of living, the nation is strengthened and beautified, and the prince is enriched. Nevertheless, trade is usually accompanied by 'latitude of conscience' and indifference to religion. Conversation with strangers tempts men of business to change old ways for new. For this reason, the ancient state of Sparta forbade foreign commerce altogether.

Naturally, Goodman did not recommend the Spartan policy to Englishmen. The Church of England, he said, is reasonable and has good laws by which trade may be well governed. But religion does need to be protected, though in such a way as not to discourage business; the Church is no longer so easily maintained as formerly when 'the more simple way of agriculture was attended to . . .'. Since the growth of trade is responsible for so much of the trouble, critics ought not to blame the clergy for all the strife over religion.

Goodman made no detailed proposal for curbing the evil influence of business and commerce; he did propose to enlarge the influence of religion. Rejecting toleration and comprehension as solutions for the religious problem, he pleaded for rational argument and persuasion. For this purpose he wanted Parliament to provide adequate provision for ministers in the towns.¹

If he did not suggest that trade should be abolished, he did show, nevertheless, a marked antipathy to the world of business, and a decided preference for a patriarchal agricultural society. His remarks could easily be taken as a veiled threat to the commercial world, veiled because he dared not brave the wrath of citizens.² Alsop was quick to see the

¹ *A Serious and Compassionate Inquiry*, pp. 37-51.

² Bishop Barlow evidently thought Goodman had been, at the least, impolitic,

vulnerable point of Goodman's essay. Ignoring the latter's elaborate eulogy of commerce, he attacked.

Let us have a proclamation against trade and shut up all the shops, he wrote, in order that the haughty and wicked people who dwell in towns may be humbled. True, it will be difficult then to raise a revenue, but all can work a little harder. Let men 'have liberty to be poor and pay their tythes, and they concern themselves little in religion or the saving of their souls. . . . These creatures indeed will make fit materials for uniformity to work upon: you may put the bridle in their mouths, and clap the saddle on their backs, and ride them till they are broken, winded, and foundred, and they will neither wince nor complain.' By abolishing navigation, giving up the sovereignty of the sea, the fishery, and the East Indian trade, by returning to a 'simple way of agriculture', the authority and power of Churchmen may easily be rescued. We ought, in fact, to follow the proposals of an odd people called Adamites, who wanted to make the world as it was in Paradise.

Abandoning irony, Alsop observed that England, as an island, had most need of trade, and was best fitted for it. Nature made necessary what 'art and industry have turn'd into a virtue . . .'. Without commerce and industry we might have peace; but peace is not the same thing to all men. Inclosers who depopulate, destroying flourishing farms, delight in the peace of solitude, but the farmers do not find it so enjoyable. When ecclesiastical projectors have destroyed trade, driven conscientious men into foreign lands, and beggared corporations, then they may indeed applaud themselves as profound statesmen. A limited toleration would be better, Alsop suggested, both for trade and for religion.¹

Standing outside the more aristocratic hierarchy of the Church of England, Alsop saw in the commercial classes the hope of religion and of civilization. He welcomed, no doubt,

for he wrote in his copy of the first edition, now in the Lincoln Collection in the Bodleian, 'Dr. Goodman (formerly of Cambridge, now 1674 a country-minister) was author of the following Inquiry. But, whoever was the author, he is a fierce Remonstrant, highly confident . . . and sufficiently ignorant.' The words omitted are illegible.

¹ *Melius Inquirendum, or a Sober Inquiry into the Reasonings of the Serious Inquiry*, chs. ii, iii.

the growth of a bourgeois society, and of a solid, virtuous, middle class in the towns. Goodman, preferring the more patriarchal, or even feudal, society whose remains were everywhere visible, felt some hostility towards those classes and that economic activity which were in effect revolutionizing England. If it was impossible to stop that revolution, to dam up the flood of trade, at least it might be directed and controlled by wise laws, the first of which should firmly establish the Anglican Church as coextensive with the English nation.

The bad effect on business of trying to enforce religious uniformity was a constant grievance. The economists, pointing to Holland, where toleration and trade seemed to go hand in hand, were nearly all in favour of freedom of conscience.¹ Men who were primarily interested in religion were not slow to use the economic argument to secure religious liberty. In *The Liberty of Prophesying*, Jeremy Taylor had observed that France was prosperous after the Edict of Nantes.² After the Restoration, however, no Anglican clergymen urged the benefits to trade as a reason for granting toleration. Herbert Croft, Bishop of Hereford, hoped only that latitude would stop the mouths of those dissenting preachers who were 'shop-prating weavers and coblers'.³

Speaking with contempt of those 'good people of God, the sober, industrious, trading part of the nation', Robert South accused them of coveting the wealth of the Church. He wanted to maintain conformity.⁴ Herbert Thorndike, the learned Prebendary of Westminster, observed that the example of Holland was irrelevant, for it was a question of religion, not of trade; and religion and trade 'cannot be both at once at the height'. Turning their own argument against them, he told Dissenters that they caused the dissensions which unsettled trade.⁵

The Nonconformist author of the *Weaver's Pocket-Book*,

¹ Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, ii. 302 ff.; 314 ff.; Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 206-7.

² *Works*, v. 351.

³ *The Naked Truth*, p. 49.

⁴ *Sermon I in Sermons*, vi. 33-4.

⁵ *The Penalties which a Due Reformation Requires in Works*, v. 480-2 (1670); quoted by Clark, *Later Stuarts*, p. 34.

John Collinges, asked whether it was lawful to injure commerce and business by religious impositions which were not commanded by God. Islanders, he said, cannot live without trade, and no one can live happily without it. Whether because he had not read the book, or from a sense of irony, he quoted from Goodman's *Serious and Compassionate Inquiry* to prove the blessings of trade. Persecution, he complained, was the great cause of business depression. Although Spain had a tremendous empire, she was poor while little Holland prospered. What was the essential difference between the two but that Holland tolerated all Christians, while Spain burnt heretics? In England, the best men are being driven to America. Collinges concluded that in trading there is a dependency which 'necessarily requires the freedom and security of all who are of any considerable fortunes'.¹

Religious freedom was the kind of which Collinges was thinking when he made this statement. But it was a maxim which could have other applications: freedom from economic restriction, or *laissez faire*, might be just as necessary. In general the philosophy of individualism, whether in religion or economics, was on the road to becoming dominant. No statement could show more clearly the connexion between religious and economic demands for freedom from external control. It was not a chance coincidence that opinion in favour of government control of industry, and the monopoly of religion by the Church of England, declined simultaneously. The tender conscience was the enemy of medieval guilds and Stuart patents of monopoly.

The connexion was specifically noticed by John Rogers, chaplain to the Earl of Berkeley, in a sermon before the Corporation of Trinity House. England, he said, has been blessed by a gracious God with harbours, naval stores, and a geographical position, fitted to make her the leading commercial nation of the world. Moreover, a wise king and a good government take great care to regulate and direct trade. Admitting that there were many objections to such regulation, of which he lacked the knowledge to judge, Rogers added that 'it is to be feared that the great outcry for liberty of trade is near of kin to that of liberty of conscience, which

¹ pp. 145-8.

to our sorrows we have experienced was only a politick fetch of a party to lay all in common, till such time as they could get sufficient power and strength to inclose all for themselves . . .'.¹ In other words, economic and religious freedom was demanded by a *bourgeoisie* which desired power, but which was not yet strong enough to annihilate its opponents. Probably preferring authority and uniformity, Rogers apparently suspected that those men who complained of regulation and control were not altogether sincere: they spoke of principles, and demanded liberty as a good in itself, but in reality they wanted freedom as an opportune means to a very concrete end. If this were true, all the arguments in favour of freedom might wither away once their advocates found them inconvenient. Three hundred years later we may suspect that this development is rapidly taking place. Rogers, however, did not carry his argument to this length, nor was he deeply hostile to men of business, even though he disagreed with the demands of some of them. He quoted from Isaiah xxiii. 8, 'our merchants are princes and our traffickers the honourable of the earth'.

In the years 1667-8 Dissenters made a strong political attack on the laws requiring uniformity, and several important pamphlets discussed trade and toleration. In *A Discourse of the Religion of England*, John Corbet pleaded for comprehension. Nonconformists, he argued, are too important to be persecuted. 'They are not excluded from the nobility; among the gentry they are not a few; but none are of more importance than they in the trading part of the people, upon whose hands the business of the nation lyes much.' They are getters, not wasters, and are remarkable for sobriety, frugality, and industry. Since the Fire and the Dutch War, men complain that trade fails; yet the best traders are being driven out of the country. If some persons fear that liberty will make citizens and commoners too powerful so that the nobility and gentry of England will lose their authority and splendour, consider that in former times, when yeomen and townsmen were rich and free, gentlemen were more respected than now. Men of rank cannot maintain their posi-

¹ *A Sermon*, preached before the Corporation of Trinity House, 30 May 1681, pp. 27-30.

tion if the common people are like slavish French peasants. Besides, trade which is the life of England cannot be managed by people in a servile and sordid condition, even though gentlemen may suffer some diminution; it is inevitable in a trading nation, where things pass from one hand to another, that new men will always be climbing to the position of gentlemen, and that genteel families will be continually decaying.

If the gentry wish to maintain their position, they must ally with the men of business, as they are already united with them in the House of Commons. In fact, many gentlemen now are sons of citizens, and the sons of gentlemen are oftentimes traders. Poor aristocrats marry rich merchants. Finally, if trade fails, the rents of landowners will fall: gentlemen and citizens do not have opposing interests. Should it be merely a matter of gallantry which causes the grudges between them, citizens might well adopt a new mode of dress, grave but proper to 'express their wealth'.¹

Corbet evidently accepted eagerly the growth of the commercial classes, who he thought were noted for their virtue. Instead of regretting the disappearance of the more static society of old England, he welcomed the fluctuating social relationships of modern commercial England. Observing the actual relationships between classes, he urged the gentry to form an even closer alliance with the *bourgeoisie*, since it was wicked and unwise, if not impossible, to suppress trade and tradesmen. By the twentieth century that alliance has become so close that the two classes are almost, if not quite, indistinguishable.

In reply to Corbet, the anonymous author of *Dolus an Virtus? or, An answer to a seditious discourse concerning the Religion of England* accused his opponent of wishing to foment rebellion by impertinently levelling gentlemen with citizens and traders. To say that the nobility were formerly more powerful when commoners were richer was a malicious mis-statement calculated to make the latter dissatisfied with their present condition: in truth, the lower orders were never before so rich or so free.² Another Anglican, Dr. Perrenchief, denied that Dissenters were noted for sobriety and

¹ pp. 23-6, 46-7.

² p. 30 (1668).

industry. Furthermore, he said, if trade languishes, plague, war, fire, and the disorder caused by fanatics are to blame, not the laws for repressing Nonconformity. Is it not seditious to tell the opponents of the Church that the government dare not extirpate them because of the danger to trade? Lastly, the nobility and gentry do not fear a prosperous and intelligent commonalty, but they do dislike that latitude in religion which destroys the respect due to persons of honour.¹

To answer his critics, Corbet published a *Second Discourse* which, however, omitted any mention of Dissenters as important men of business. But the economic argument was taken up again by the Nonconformist leader, Dr. John Owen. In a pamphlet called *Indulgence and Toleration Considered in a Letter to a Person of Honour*, he remarked that the industry of those persecuted for religion was extremely important for the nation. Because of repressive laws, imprisonment, and fines, hands are taken from labour, stocks from trading, and 'minds from contrivances of industry'. The King himself is injured in his purse, and in the loss of his subjects who emigrate. As trade decays, the persecutors themselves begin to feel the shoe pinch.² In a second pamphlet Owen mentioned in passing that the trade and wealth of England depended very largely upon the Nonconformists' endeavours. Some private individuals, he observed, find it advantageous to suppress their competitors, but the nation as a whole is the loser.³ Again answering Corbet, and Owen, Perrenchief observed that wealth was not an argument for religion: there had never been any religious quarrels in England until the present age when men 'glutted with too great a prosperity (the chief cause of all civil wars) . . . grew impatient of laws . . .'.⁴

The most outspoken critic of the argument that toleration was necessary for trade was Samuel Parker. In the Preface to *A Discourse of Ecclesiastical Politie* he spoke of Dissenters as

¹ *A Discourse of Toleration in Answer to a late Book intituled A Discourse of the Religion of England*, pp. 34-6, 58 (1668).

² pp. 7-8, 23 (1667).

³ *A Peace-Offering in an Apology and Humble Plea for Indulgence and Libertie of Conscience*, pp. 37-8 (1667).

⁴ *Indulgence not Justified: being a continuation of the Discourse of Toleration*, p. 2 (1668).

the rabble who mistakenly consider themselves to be the darlings of heaven, and the best of citizens. Let them remember, he warned, that the only record of Christ being angry was when he whipped tradesmen from the temple.

In discussing liberty of conscience, he continued, the most important considerations are political—latitude is destructive of government and civil society. Therefore it is not necessary to deal at length with the effect of enforced uniformity on trade, for trade is never so important as the peace of kingdoms. In fact, to encourage commerce in unsettled times is positively bad policy.

'I confess I cannot but smile when I observe how some that would be thought wonderfully grave and solemn statesmen labour with mighty projects of setting up this and that manufacture; . . . to erect and encourage trading combinations is only to build so many nests of faction and sedition, and to enable these giddy and humoursom people to create publick disturbances. For 'tis notorious that there is not any sort of people so inclinable to seditious practises as the trading part of a nation. . . . And, if we reflect upon our late miserable distractions, 'tis easie to observe how the quarrel was chiefly hatch'd in the shops of tradesmen, and cherish'd by the zeal of prentice-boys and city-gossips.'

Even now, fanatics are concentrated in towns where they make a great noise and lead us to believe that they are numerous; in country villages not one in twenty is a Dissenter. To give these rebels wealth is like putting weapons into the hands of madmen: 'there is no creature so ungovernable as a wealthy fanatick.' Until government and peace are firmly settled, 'tis just as wise and safe for a prince to enrich his subjects with trade and commerce as 'tis to load weak and unfinished foundations with great and weighty superstructures'. The lower orders have no common sense and would use their wealth to overthrow all authority.¹

Of the several replies to Parker's defence of uniformity only that of John Owen considered the economic argument.² To insinuate that the kingdom is on the verge of a rebellion, he retorted, is seditious and untrue. Besides, if it were, that would be no reason for discouraging business. On the contrary, wise governors know that their subjects are more

¹ Preface, pp. v, ix, xxxvi–xliv (3rd ed., 1671).

² Marvell's reply, *The Rehearsal Transposed*, merely referred in passing to trade.

contented when wealthy than when poor. Men of property want security to keep what they have won, and to pass it to their children. Not prosperity, but fear of losing riches creates dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, does the author of the *Discourse* realize the importance of business for all Englishmen, asked Owen? Rents and revenues of the king as well as the nobility are connected with the profits of trade; the great body of the people live in towns which depend for their existence upon trading; the navy, necessary to defend a country whose population is too small to support a large army, must recruit its sailors from the merchant marine.¹

Although Owen's reply to Parker was not especially brilliant, it did attack Parker where he was most vulnerable, and it probably had a great effect. According to Baxter, Owen's reputation was greatly advanced among Nonconformists.² At any rate, Parker complained that hatred had been stirred against him because Owen had misrepresented his thoughts on trade. Without admitting it, he withdrew the statements he had previously made on the subject. Denying that he had ever written so much as a syllable in disparagement of prosperous business and commerce, he taunted Dissenters with being unduly sensitive when they thought that their gain as well as their godliness was being attacked. The *Discourse*, he concluded, had merely stated that liberty of conscience, since it unsettled government, would unsettle trade, too, while uniformity would benefit social order, and consequently trade.³ In fact, Parker beat a retreat: he had made a political error in attacking the calling of the commercial classes, Owen had caught him out, and he was forced to retire. Just as in the similar debate between Goodman and Alsop, the Anglican proponent found it unwise to incur the hostility of citizens. The economic argument for toleration was better left unanswered.⁴

¹ *Truth and Innocence Vindicated in a Survey of a Discourse Concerning Ecclesiastical Polity*, pp. 74-81 (1669).

² *Reliquiae*, iii. 41-2.

³ *A Defence and Continuation of the Ecclesiastical Politie*, pp. 39-44 (1671).

⁴ Two other anonymous pamphleteers who urged the necessity of liberty of conscience to help trade may have been nonconforming divines: *A Few Sober Queries upon the late Proclamation for enforcing the laws against conventicles* (1668); *Omnia Comesta a Belo, or, an Answer out of the West to a Question out of the North* (1667).

It was equally unwise, we may suppose, to accuse the 'sober, trading part of the nation' of having been the rebels of the period of civil war. Goodman, Perrenchief, and Parker suggested that such was the case; the author of the *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety* hinted as much;¹ Thomas Long mentioned as a fact that the rebels were zealots who wanted to engross the trade and wealth of England.² But no one stressed the point. South spoke a sentence or two about Cromwell's followers, 'a company of coblers, taylors, draymen, drunkards, whoremongers, and broken tradesmen, though since, I confess, dignify'd with the title of the sober trading part of the nation . . .'. They were paupers and scum.³

The most important defence by a Nonconformist clergyman of the classes who supported the Parliament against the king came from Richard Baxter. Although he denied that the Puritans were responsible for the war, putting the blame on the higher clergy for the religious distractions,⁴ he accepted the opinion that the men of middle rank had been the king's enemies. The religious people who wanted to reform the Church, and those persons who feared arbitrary government as destructive of the rights of property, he said, joined together. When war came, the greater part of the nobility, the gentry in those parts where the king's army penetrated, along with their tenants and the poor rabble, followed the king. Parliament had

'the smaller part (as some thought) of the gentry in most of the counties, and the greatest part of the tradesmen, freeholders, and the middle sort of men; especially in those corporations and countries which depend on cloathing and such manufactures. If you ask the reasons for this difference, ask also why in France it is not commonly the nobility nor the beggars, but the merchants and middle sort of men that were protestants.'

Parliamentarians said it was because tradesmen are more intelligent than stupid peasants and servile tenants, while gentlemen are dependent upon the king for their estates and

¹ pp. 253-5, 306-7.

² *The Original of War, A Sermon*, p. 3 (1683).

³ *Sermon I in Sermons*, v. 24, 76-7 (1685).

⁴ *Reliquiae*, i. 32-3; *True History of Councils*, ch. xiv (1682).

social position; royalists claimed that gentlemen know more of state affairs than freeholders and tradesmen.

The fact of the matter was, he continued, that the pious opposed the gentry who were not religious but were good Anglicans. The latter were men of the world, desiring honour, power, and luxury, asking only for a formal religion to preserve a decent appearance. The former, however, were truly pious, despising the things of this world, serious and sober, pursuing a godly life. Because the king's supporters were profane, and his enemies religious, the Parliament gained the victory.¹

Baxter's opinions were not based on hearsay. He himself had experience of the ungodly rabble who supported the king: they drove him from Kidderminster. And his royalist neighbour, Sir Ralph Clare, continued to make trouble for him after the Restoration. Another country gentleman denounced him in the street at the beginning of the war.² Although he had little desire to join in the conflict, preferring to remain neutral, he was forced to take refuge with Parliamentary supporters. Little wonder that he came to the conclusion that gentry and poor rabble were inferior to the middle and commercial classes who defended him. Little wonder also if the former incumbent at Kidderminster, Mr. Dance, saw as his natural allies Sir Ralph Clare and his dependants who had him restored in 1662 against the wishes of more than 1,600 of the 1,800 communicants.³

Probably many Anglicans and Nonconformists were influenced by personal as well as religious motives in preferring one section of the population to another. At any rate, churchmen and dissenters were divided in their preferences. More favourable to the aristocratic, landowning classes, Anglicans maintained to some extent the traditional, patriarchal, social theories which had been developed in the Middle Ages. Not so subject to violent change, providing an opportunity for the exercise of the quiet virtues of

¹ *Reliquiae*, i. 16-18, 30-1, 34; *True History of Councils*, ch. xiv; John Corbet agreed that the middle ranks supported Parliament: *An Historicall Relation of the Military Government of Gloucester*, pp. 9, 14 (1645).

² *Reliquiae*, i. 40, 42.

³ *Ibid.* ii. 298-9. According to Baxter, more than 1,600 parishioners signed a petition in his favour.

obedience, mercy, and charity, the hierarchical society of the country seemed admirably suited to Anglican social and religious ideals. For two reasons, however, the Church did not adopt a policy of blind reaction, nor did its clergy want to return, after the manner of some modern theorists, to a simple agricultural and feudal economy. Anglicans, in spite of Alsop's taunt, were not Adamites. In the first place, although the country-side exhibited more of the features of feudal organization than did the towns, nevertheless landowning in England was a capitalist enterprise in the seventeenth century, and landowners were not infrequently men who had made fortunes in the corporations. Among these men Anglicans would find no support for a policy of reaction. The gap between landowners and townsmen was rapidly filling in, the distinctions between the two were already in many cases superficial ones, and Anglicanism could not have founded a policy on the antagonism between them.¹ In the second place, in so far as that antagonism still did exist, the power of the *bourgeoisie* in the towns was too strong to be attacked with impunity. Wise men could see that trade had come to stay, and that it would increase. Consequently, those clergymen who did look with distrust and contempt upon 'the sober, trading part of the nation' were wary in expressing that distrust and contempt. Moreover, liberal-minded men like Sprat and Stillingfleet were generous in their opinions of the *bourgeoisie*, and tended to bestow less favour upon gentlemen.

On the other hand, Dissenters, while definitely preferring the men of middle rank, cannot be said to have been hostile to the social organization and classes of the country-side. As we saw in the first chapter, they too maintained in many cases a patriarchal and aristocratic social theory. If gentlemen would only perform their functions, they would be the best of men. Unfortunately they did not, while the traders apparently did. Consequently, dissenting divines accepted and welcomed the growth of the trading classes, abandoning where necessary the ideals of a paternal and static society. They wanted freedom for religion, they urged that it would help trade, and, in general, they defended the interests of

¹ For the trading interests of courtiers see Clark, *The Later Stuarts*, p. 59.

traders. They sided with the theories of mercantilism which were thought to be primarily in the interests of the business classes; at the same time their demand for religious toleration was not unconnected with the demand for freedom of trade: toleration and *laissez-faire* are members of the same family. Economic and religious paternalism fell together.¹

Exactly what men were to be included in the category of sober traders neither their spiritual guardians, the dissenting clergy, nor their spiritual foes, the Churchmen, troubled to explain. The former lumped together almost all people who lived in towns, whether poor journeymen working for wages, or wealthy capitalists, as if they belonged to the same section of society. Proletarians, middle-class producers who owned a small amount of property and were to some extent independent, and rich entrepreneurs were considered together as one order, separate from aristocratic landowners and peasant farmers; oftentimes freeholders were linked with the first order as men of middle rank. Similarly, Anglicans were likely to speak of citizens as if they were all of a piece, although, in order to pour contumely on these men, they sometimes emphasized the poorest element—rabble, whore-mongers, and decayed tradesmen.

The lack of any adequate description of the social structure of the towns was due partially, perhaps, to the fact that references to tradesmen were for the most part casual, and not intended as studied and exhaustive analyses. But it was also due in part to faulty observation. Dissenting divines started with a prejudice in favour of small independent producers—the weavers, grocers, tanners, cutlers, and shopkeepers of Bunyan's congregation.² They thought only of these when they thought of men of business. If some persons were poor wage-earners or unemployed, proletarians whom we should distinguish from the *bourgeoisie*, they were usually thought of as beggars. And beggars, according to the best middle-class theory, were men who could acquire a little property and be independent if they would only do a little work, be prudent, and give up their vicious habits of

¹ Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 232, 234 ff.

² Brown, John, *John Bunyan*, 1928, pp. 206, 208, 339, 371.

life. On the other hand, rich capitalists were often looked upon as if they were nothing more than exceptionally successful shopkeepers or artisans. No one, apparently, understood that there was a distinction to be made between the man who had a small amount of property, the fruit of his own efforts and the necessary instrument of his own productive labour, and the man who had a fortune so great that he could not possibly be said to have earned it, and which he could only use by buying the labour of others.

Nor did any one realize that these great capitalists, as they grew in numbers and power, were actually the enemies of the virtuous middle classes, were destined to make labourers and beggars of these same classes.¹ As yet, the possession of commercial capital, great or small, or even the possibility of acquiring a little capital in the course of a lifetime of work, was sufficient to earn for a man the coveted title of worthy citizen. Rich merchant and humble shopkeeper were still thought to be brothers with common interests. Listing those men whose callings were useful to society, Baxter omitted any mention of wage-labourers or entrepreneurs.² He did not regard individuals of either class as useless, but he did not recognize that they formed distinct economic groups.

This error of analysis can be attributed in part to the fact that the middle classes in industry and commerce were in fact much more prominent in comparison to proletarians and capitalists than in present-day England. Although it is less true of the period after the Civil Wars than of the first half of the century, Professor Tawney's description can still be applied to the Restoration. Except in certain exceptional industries and districts, he writes, there was no large mass of workers dependent solely upon wages for their existence. The small masters who worked alongside their journeymen were still typical.

'Differing in wealth from the prosperous merchant or clothier, such men resembled them in economic and social habits, and the distinction between them was one of degree, not of kind. In the world of industry vertical divisions still cut deeper than horizontal fissures between class

¹ See Unwin, *Industrial Organization in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*, for the struggle between small masters and merchant capitalists.

² *Christian Directory*, i. 449.

and class. The number of those who could reasonably be described as independent, since they owned their own tools and controlled their own businesses, formed a far larger proportion of the population than is the case in capitalist societies.'

Moreover, the business classes, still young, were conscious of the fact that they formed a group apart from the aristocracy. They lived in an 'age before the centre of economic gravity had shifted from the substantial tradesmen to the exporting merchant, the industrial capitalist and the financier'.¹ Robert South could still write with some truth that the ordinary way of getting an estate was by working for it, and working to serve other men's needs.² Property still had a function,³ and wage-labour was not so important as now.

Nevertheless, after 1660 it was becoming more and more apparent that the richest merchants, industrialists, and financiers formed a class by themselves. As they became distinguished from the lesser men of business, they became aware of the fact that the rivalry between themselves and the landed folk was based upon an illusion; 'the former rivals were on the way to be compounded in the gilded clay of a plutocracy embracing both'.⁴ Divisions of blood were broken down by intermarriage, and even religion no longer divided gentleman from citizen to the same extent that it had before the wars. Anglican capitalists were scarcely less prominent than Nonconformist:⁵ in the next century it became usual for wealthy Nonconformists to join the Anglican communion.⁶ A visitor to the London theatre in 1722 might have heard the speech of Mr. Sealand, begging leave to say 'that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honorable, and almost as useful, as you landed folks that have always thought yourselves so much above us . . .'.⁷

¹ For the whole of this paragraph I have borrowed from *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 207-10, 244.

² *Sermon XI in Sermons*, iv. 439-40 (1692).

³ Above, p. 103; Tawney, *Acquisitive Society*, ch. v.

⁴ Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 208; Clark, *The Later Stuarts*, pp. 35-6.

⁵ Richards, *The Early History of English Banking*, 1929, pp. 220-3.

⁶ Bebb, *Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life*, ch. iii; Levy, Hermann, *Economic Liberalism*, 1913, ch. v.

⁷ Steele, Sir Richard, *The Conscious Lovers*, Act IV, Scene ii.

The happy union of the moneyed and the landed interests had, however, not yet been successfully concluded. Older conservatives like Clarendon, although he himself was something of a parvenu, could still write with disdain of 'people of an inferior degree, who, by good husbandry, clothing, and other thriving arts, had gotten very great fortunes, and, by degrees getting themselves into the gentlemen's estates, were angry that they found not themselves in the same esteem and reputation with those whose estates they had . . .'.¹ Sometimes classed with ordinary tradesmen, sometimes given a status by himself, or even styled a gentleman, the wealthy business man had an uncertain social position, however secure his economic basis. This uncertainty was reflected, although not explicitly recognized, in the writings of several divines.

Liberal Anglicans like Tillotson and Barrow had some respect for successful men of trade. If a man gets a great estate by his own honest endeavours, wrote Barrow, he is more satisfied, and more commendable, than those whose fortunes descend upon them by chance. For 'he feeleth a solid pleasure, and a pure complacency therein; and the manner of getting it doth more please him than the thing itself, as true hunters do love the sport more than the quarry . . .'.² That capitalists had such an attitude towards their wealth is undoubtedly true; that it should be thought a laudable attitude by an Anglican preacher may cause surprise.

Tillotson recommended as a praiseworthy charity apprenticing poor children to a trade whereby they might acquire great fortunes and be able to relieve hundreds of others.³ In another sermon, however, preached before the House of Commons, he remarked that the best men of business are usually of mediocre intellectual ability. For they admire riches, and are able to keep their minds perpetually intent upon their business, disdaining scholars and thinkers who, they say, are too wise to be rich.⁴ To a man of this mentality, wrote South, the clergy must preach of bargain

¹ *History of the Rebellion*, 1888 ed., bk. vi, p. 5; also Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, p. 250, Feiling, *Tory Party*, pp. 69-70.

² *Of Industry*, pp. 50-1.

³ *Sermon XVIII in Works*, iii. 193.

⁴ *Sermon* preached before the House of Commons, 16 April 1690, *Works*, iii. 423.

and sale, or principal and interest, 'and if you can persuade him that godliness is gain in his own sense, perhaps you may do something with him'.¹ South was suspicious of any man who acquired wealth in a hurry, for riches, he said, ought not to pour into coffers like a landslide or flood, impoverishing and often robbing neighbours on the way, but should drop in by small proportions. Poor men should slacken their pace in growing rich. When men step from poverty into power they usually know no bounds and are intolerable in their exactions. Rich men may fleece the skin of the poor, but the newly rich strip the very bones.²

Nevertheless, in addressing the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, South spoke with highest praise of the City.

'I look upon your city', he said, 'as the great and magnificent stage of business, and by consequence the best place of improvement; for from the school we go to the university, but from the university to London. And therefore, as in your city-meetings you must be esteemed the most considerable body of the nation, so, met in the church, I look upon you as an auditory fit to be waited on . . . by both universities.'

He added that he would not presume to instruct, but would thank the Londoners for their help in restoring King Charles.³

Anglican clergymen had little to say about capitalists, but what they did say indicates that they were less hostile to them than to the lesser tradesmen. These latter were accused of murdering one king, but the former were thanked for restoring another. The silence of Churchmen may be evidence that they were beginning to wonder if men of wealth might not be valuable allies against popery on the one hand, and the radicalism of sectarians on the other. Besides, prominent clergymen who kept large accounts with London bankers could not easily condemn the financial interest.

Seth Ward and Samuel Parker were heavy depositors with Sir Robert Viner, banker and goldsmith. Parker did not want to see trade encouraged, but we may suppose that he wanted his banker to prosper. Unfortunately, Viner went bankrupt when the Exchequer was closed in 1672, and

¹ *Sermon* preached at Christ Church, in *Sermons*, iii. 78.

² *Sermon X* in *Sermons*, iv. 409-11.

³ *Sermon* preached before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen at St. Paul's, 9 November 1662, Dedication, in *Works*, vol. i.

Parker may have lost his money. At any rate, he complained of losses which that event occasioned to 'widows and orphans'.¹

Nonconformists, too, had little to say in particular about great merchants and industrialists. Most of their praise seems to have been reserved for humbler men of business. Nevertheless, in no case did they attack capitalists, except in so far as these were included under the general title of lovers of riches; but gentlemen, as we have seen, were severely criticized.

In dedicating *The Weaver's Pocket-Book* to Bernard Church and John Richards, aldermen of Norwich, Collinges said that he wished to honour them because they had both made great fortunes from weaving, and because they were examples of the piety and goodness which are usually found among men of that trade. He was, in other words, praising them, in part, because they had managed to rise in the world; there is no evidence to show that he suspected either the newly rich or the social system which made them possible. In fact, he thought it a wholesome rule of Divine Providence which made humble families to prosper and found fortunes, and established families to decline; he praised the trade of weaving because it brought riches to men who started with a capital of £10.²

Thomas Gouge, also, had no fear of men who rose in the ranks of business. It is an indication of his sympathies that the men whom he named as examples of those whose wealth increased the more they gave to charity were either merchants or doctors. One was a mercer, another a haberdasher, a third a draper, and the fourth was called a merchant; three others were doctors, and only the last, Samuel Duncle, Esq., of Pusey, Berkshire, was a squire.³

Henry Sampson, who was ejected at the Restoration and

¹ Richards, *Early History of English Banking*, p. 222; Parker, *History of His Own Times*, 1728, pp. 92-4.

² *Epistle Dedicatory*, pp. 107-9, 98.

³ *Surest and Safest Way of Thriving*, pp. 130-7 (1673); above, p. 129. The connexion between the medical profession and Nonconformity seems to have been strong. In 1662 Baxter stayed in London with Dr. Micklethwaite who attended Charles II, became President of the Royal College of Physicians, was knighted in 1681, and who was physician to the Earl of Bedford, the patron of Dissenters; Powicke, *Reverend Richard Baxter under the Cross*, p. 17; *D.N.B.* A letter from Micklethwaite to Bedford's chaplain, dated 5 October 1669, is in the Bodleian, MS.

afterwards took up the profession of medicine, jotted in his note-books, without any sign of disapproval, some instances of families which had risen from nothing to possess great wealth. Of these one was the Foley whose ancestor was a nailer.¹ Richard Foley, the nailer, a native of Stourbridge, was sufficiently successful to found a free school in Dudley, and he chose young Richard Baxter as his first master and usher. While in Dudley Baxter lived at the house of Richard Foley, Junior.² But it was another son, Thomas, who was Baxter's especial friend. An iron manufacturer, he married a wealthy woman, prospered in his business, and was the founder of the family fortune. Because Baxter thought him good as well as rich, the *Crucifying of the World by the Cross of Christ*, reproving the sensual gentry, was dedicated to him. In the *Reliquiae* Foley was mentioned as a great mercy of God to the county of Worcester. He rose, said Baxter, from almost nothing to have more than £5,000 per annum, and that by just and honest dealing. He purchased patronages in order to secure good ministers—he offered Kidderminster to Baxter—and among other charities he endowed a hospital at Stourbridge with £500 per annum to teach poor children reading and writing, and to set them in apprenticeships.³ He also helped to send Adam Martindale's son to a Nonconformist academy kept by another ejected minister, Henry Hickman.⁴ Such rare prosperity, and such holy use of it, concluded Baxter, deserve to be mentioned to the glory of God and of the man himself.⁵

Rawlinson Letters, 109, pp. 78-9 a and b. In 1679 Baxter preached the funeral sermon of Mrs. Thomas Coxe and dedicated the printed sermon to her husband, Dr. Coxe, who was later a President of the Royal College; *Reliquiae*, iii, 189; *D.N.B.* George Swinnock dedicated the Second Part of *The Christian-mans Calling* to Dr. George Bate, F.R.S., physician to Oliver and Charles; *D.N.B.* Of the ejected ministers, fifty-nine took up the practice of medicine; Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, p. lvi.

Duncle was no doubt Samuel Duncle, for whom see *The Victoria History of the Counties of England, Berkshire*.

¹ 'The Day-Books of Dr. Henry Sampson', *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 36, 1851, pp. 12-13. The extracts printed here are taken from Add. MS. 4460 in the British Museum. The editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* appended the following note: 'The Foleys will not, we hope, object to be reminded of their honest descent from Goodman Foley. . . .'

² *Reliquiae*, i, 13.

⁴ Martindale, *Life*, p. 188.

³ *Reliquiae*, iii, 71, 93.

⁵ *Reliquiae*, iii, 93.

Later, Baxter estimated that Thomas had more than £7,000 yearly income.¹ Still later, recommending him as an example to all rich men, Baxter recorded that Foley's three sons, all of them Members of Parliament, had been left between them £15,000 a year.²

The rise of Thomas was indeed remarkable. To Baxter it seemed to be a special blessing of God, and he had no criticism to make of a man who was pious, honest, and successful, nor of a society which permitted a man to grow from humble circumstances to have £15,000 a year. Thomas Foley was just one of those tradesmen who were the strength of religion in the land. But the later history of the Foley family proved that industrial capitalists had much in common with gentlemen who were the 'strength of iniquity'. For Thomas's second son, Paul, became a Tory Speaker of the House, while a grandson, Thomas II, was one of the twelve Tory peers created in 1712.³

Rebutting the charge that Puritans were covetous and hard in their commercial dealings, Baxter said that they were more charitable than other men. He cited as example Thomas Foley, and a tradesman of London who gave away £100 a year in one county and much in London.⁴ The latter was probably Henry Ashurst,⁵ 'commonly taken for the most exemplary saint that was of publick notice in this city'.⁶ A younger son of Henry Ashurst, J.P., of Ashurst, Lancashire, he was apprenticed to a draper in London at the age of fifteen. Instead of consorting with harlots, or frequenting playhouses, he read religious books and applied himself to learn the trade of a draper. He invested his inheritance in a partnership, but Mr. Row, the partner left after three years to join the Parliament's army. He prospered throughout the wars when other men left off trading, and he married well on the instigation of Reverend Simeon Ashe after narrowly escaping an unsuitable match. The sceptical may wonder if

¹ *Catechizing of Families*, p. 231.

² *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, pp. 42-3.

³ *Dictionary of National Biography*.

⁴ *Poor Man's Family Book*, pp. 390-1.

⁵ For his life see Powicke, F. J., 'The Reverend Richard Baxter and his Lancashire Friend Mr. Henry Ashurst', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, vol. 13, no. 2, 1929.

⁶ *Reliquiae*, iii. 189.

his success may not have come from war profiteering, but Baxter attributed it to other causes. Henry kept to his word in trading, refused to follow the common practice of bargaining in taverns, and did not neglect works of charity. 'God strangely kept those men that he trusted from breaking, when the most noted tradesmen in the same towns broke. . . .'

His charities were indeed munificent. He supported a conventicle in Milk Street in which Baxter was the preacher, 1661-2; and he gave £100 yearly to the ejected ministers of Lancashire, besides money for schools and books. As treasurer of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England (he was also one of the principal traders to America) he gave time and money to help John Eliot convert the Indians. In his will he left £100 to Harvard College. His life, wrote Baxter, proves that men can be successful in business without neglecting God.¹

Even more than Foley, Ashurst exemplified the close connexion which existed between gentlemen and merchants. A younger son of a gentleman himself, he was apprenticed in London, and became an alderman. His eldest son, Henry, became a baronet in 1688; his second son was knighted in 1689, and was elected Lord Mayor in 1693.² Sir Henry was a constant friend of Baxter, and was, along with Robert Boyle, his executor.³ To him was dedicated the *Reliquiae*. From the dates at which their honours were conferred we may conclude that the Ashursts, unlike the Foleys, did not go the whole way to become Tories. But Whigs, too, were gentlemen.

Mr. H. G. Wood has written that 'so far as the use of wealth is concerned, Puritan and Anglican were practically agreed as to their standards of Christian duty'.⁴ They were not agreed, however, as to what classes performed their

¹ Baxter's references to Ashurst are in the *Reliquiae*, ii. 290, 302; iii. 17, 189; and especially in the funeral sermon, *Faithful Souls Shall be with Christ: the certainty proved, and their Christianity described and exemplified in the truly Christian Life and Death of that excellent, amiable saint, Henry Ashurst, Esq., Citizen of London*, in *Works*, xviii. 146-60 (1681). The funeral sermon of Henry's brother, Benjamin, was preached by another prominent dissenter, William Bates. See his *Works*.

² *Dictionary of National Biography*, art. 'Henry Ashurst'.

³ Dedication to the *Reliquiae*.

⁴ 'The influence of the Reformation on Ideas Concerning Wealth and Property', in *Property, Its Rights and Duties*, p. 166.

duties best. Anglicans continued to look to the country and distrust the town, while Dissenters found their most appreciative audiences in the merchant halls of London. The former were distrustful of social change and clung to the idea of a static society; the latter, prepared to grapple with the world no matter how dangerous it might be, were not reluctant to welcome an age of business activity. But the cleft between the two was not wide. And it was almost closed when the consideration was the great capitalist merchants and industrialists. Nonconformists, seeing in wealthy tradesmen the marks of the middle class from which they had risen, and Anglicans, seeing the community of interest between these rich citizens and gentlemen, agreed in accepting them as valuable and important members of English society. Whatever their attitude was in former times, the Puritans of the Restoration showed no antipathy towards capitalists.¹ Baxter, as well as Seth Ward and Samuel Parker, deposited with Sir Thomas Viner.² Merchants found their best friends among the Dissenters: no Anglican picked a man such as Henry Ashurst or Thomas Foley as his ideal saint. But Churchmen were not unfriendly.

Together the preferences of Anglican and Dissenter reflected the social divisions of England. On the one hand, clergymen of the Church supported and defended the aristocratic elements which were still strong, and are even yet more apparent in England than on the continent or in the United States. On the other hand, Dissenters were the protagonists of the rising *bourgeoisie*.³ Where the two main divisions converged, or were about to converge, in the persons of capitalists who allied themselves with the aristocracy, there also the attitudes of Churchman and chapelman tended to unite.

¹ Cf. the statements of Weber, *The Protestant Ethic*, n., pp. 279-80; and Levy, Hermann, *Economic Liberalism*, ch. v. By the end of the next century the Anglican communion had absorbed most of the wealthy Nonconformists; Bebb, *Nonconformity and Social and Economic Life*, p. 57.

² *Reliquiae*, iii. 89; Appendix VII, p. 118. Baxter had deposited about £1,000 which he intended to use to found a free school. But the money was lost when Viner went bankrupt owing to the Stop of the Exchequer in 1672.

³ It is interesting to note that among Anglicans the common expression was, according to South, 'as drunk as a beggar'; *Sermon I in Sermons*, x. 3. But in the United States where the Nonconformist tradition was strong, the expression was changed to 'as drunk as a lord'.

PART III BUSINESS

I TRADE AND RELIGION

THE Nonconformist preference for men of business, and the growing tolerance of Anglicans for these same men, was justified, from the religious point of view, by the belief that trade and religion were united activities of the human spirit, that the virtues of one were the virtues of the other. The connexion between commercialism and the philosophy of Puritanism, a philosophy which was strongest in dissenting circles, but which was by no means without adherents within the Church of England, was apparent to contemporaries. Max Weber and Troeltsch brought it to the attention of modern historians, and Professor Tawney has explained how Puritanism came to form this alliance with trade, particularly in England.¹ In this and the following chapter we have only to add a few bricks to the edifice which their researches have erected.

The central link in the chain which bound together the religion of God and the worship of Mammon was, of course, the doctrine of the calling. The Puritan was profoundly distrustful of the world in which he lived, but at the same time he refused to withdraw from it. The natural world, in fact, was not in itself evil, nor were its institutions necessarily corrupt. Sin lay in the heart of man: the righteous man strove against the evil in his own soul. If he won that private battle, social evils would disappear as by magic. To pretend to be afraid of the society which God had created was an evasion: the individual and not society was at fault. We cannot escape sin, wrote William Bridge, by becoming

¹ Other historians have continued these investigations, and there is still much controversy over such questions as which came first, capitalism or the spirit of capitalism? did other confessions develop a similar bourgeois outlook? and were other influences more important than religion in fashioning the capitalist spirit? But all agree that in England at the time of the Restoration, the religion of Puritans and the religion of trade were, in many respects, complementary faiths.

monks and nuns.¹ For the man who had faith in God hell itself might be made pure.

It is true that man could be saved by faith alone, and not by works. But it was a faith which inevitably produced works. Furthermore, by the seventeenth century, the belief that works were an evidence that a man had the faith which saved had been revived. These works, at the same time the effect and evidence of faith, were not isolated acts, the occasional good deeds of worldlings, but were the continuous, everyday activity of the good man. For faith provided men with a spiritual flame which did not flare up on Sundays merely to die down during the other six days of the week: the converted Christian could never take a single action, nor think a single thought, without a purpose to glorify his God. As Baxter observed, a man must be a Puritan or an atheist: there is no place for formal Christians.² It was not enough to worship God at one time, and Mammon at another. If both were to be worshipped, it would have to be simultaneously: God must move into the counting-houses—and Mammon into the temple.

If the Christian could not withdraw from the world, and if at the same time his religion must be his whole life, it was plain that he must carry his religion into the world. Earthly callings must needs be spiritualized. Since there was no important distinction between religious and secular activity, the Christian must perform the latter with the same intensity and singleness of purpose as the former. Granted that the sane man should never endanger his eternal happiness by relaxing his vigilance, granted that he must spend much of his life in buying and selling, it followed that he must buy and sell for the same reason that he prayed.³ As another of the ejected, Thomas Cole, wrote, a large part of a man's duty as a Christian lies in the work of his particular calling.⁴ God, said Robert South, is served in the field and in the shop, and it is a bold presumption to suppose that He prefers us to neglect that service for the more formal worship of prayer

¹ *How to Walk with God in our Callings* in *Works*, vol. v (1673); also Baxter, *Crucifying of the World* in *Works*, ix. 349.

² *The Poor Man's Family Book* in *Works*, xix. 394 (1674).

³ Conant, *Sermon IV* in *Sermons*, i. 202.

⁴ *Sermon XX* in *Morning Exercises*, iii. 474.

and ritual.¹ By making his work a spiritual calling, man could remain in the world, yet serve God in all his actions.

By the end of the seventeenth century the whole conception of the calling was so well known that it had become trite. Men were speaking of 'infamous' and 'sinful' callings, forgetting that such were in fact not callings at all.² But the mere fact that a truth was commonplace made little difference to professional moralists. Again and again they insisted that everyday tasks were religious acts to be performed primarily because they served God, and secondarily because they served men. The man who has no calling offends against all the commandments of the second table. He cannot be excused by saying that he has enough wealth to keep himself. For a stated course of labour is not necessary only because we must be maintained: it is an ordinance of God. Any useful work, if spiritualized, contributes to the glory of God. Not only must we be faithful in our business, but we must be conscious of the religious significance of our faithfulness. For to do the right deed for the wrong reason will not satisfy the Lord of Israel.³ Pious men must pray, 'So spiritualize our hearts and affections that we may have heavenly hearts in earthly employments, and so may serve thee our God whilst we are serving our own necessities.'⁴ The pious tradesman will know that 'his shop as well as his chappel is holy ground'.⁵

Although Nonconformists were the principal expounders of the doctrine of the calling, Anglicans did not neglect it.⁶ They were especially concerned, as we have seen, in persuading gentlemen to accept their social responsibilities as religious duties. Tillotson, however, observed that the com-

¹ *Sermon III in Sermons*, vii. 46.

² Tillotson, *Sermon CXVI in Works*, ii. 116; Baxter, *Christian Directory*, i. 449; cf. Conant, *Sermon X in Sermons*, ii. 348-57.

³ Clarke, Samuel, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. 23; Bridge, *How to Walk with God in our Callings in Works*, v. 81; Ashwood, Bartholomew, *The Heavenly Trade or the Best Merchandizing: the only way to live well in impoverishing times*, p. 247 (1679); Baxter, Benjamin, *A Posing Question*, ch. ix; Conant, *Sermon IV in Sermons*, i. 203; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, ii, ch. viii (1659).

⁴ Gouge, *The Principles of the Christian Religion in Works*, pp. 90-1 (1676).

⁵ Swinnoek, *The Christian-mans Calling*, i. 33 (1662).

⁶ Sherlock, *The Principles of the Holy Christian Religion*, p. 41 (1673); Jenny, Jehu, *A Sermon Preached at the Funeral of the Right Honble the Lady Frances Paget*, pp. 11-12 (1672).

mand of the apostle, 'Be careful to maintain good works' (Titus iii. 8) apparently meant to pursue an honest calling; and in the margin of the Bible, he continued, this was interpreted, to 'professe honest trades'.¹ Nonconformists were accustomed to use the word calling as synonymous with any of the occupations of the middle classes.

The three great virtues to be exercised by men who believed that God had called them to their daily business were those which, according to Joseph Alleine, were contained in the Eighth Commandment—diligence, abstinence, and watchfulness or prudence.² John Sharp, later Archbishop of York, repeated them in a sermon to the Lord Mayor and Aldermen.³

As a matter of course, hard work was thought to be the duty of every one. Gentlemen and beggars were reprov'd for their idleness; Baxter wrote that the 'female sex' were especially guilty, busying themselves only about recreations.⁴ When Solomon praised the wife who spun and wove (Prov. xxxi. 10), wrote Towerson, he was not thinking primarily of the husband's profit. 'Such works as those must be works of duty and religion, and concern the consciences as well as the profits of those to whom they belong.' For God calls every man to some useful course of labour.⁵ But the discourses on diligence were often directed to those men who were not tempted to idleness by hopeless poverty, unemployment, or great riches. The middle classes apparently profited most from the clerical teaching on industry. In 1700 Isaac Barrow's treatises *Of Industry*, originally written principally for gentlemen, were republished for the edification of tradesmen, according to the Advertisement. And it was the dissenting ministers, the spiritual guides of the trading classes, who had most to say of the duty of hard work. Again and again they insisted that God was a master demanding long hours and strict attention to business.⁶ Wasting time was

¹ *Sermon CLIII in Works*, ii. 347; *Sermon XLVII in Works*, i. 327-8.

² *A Most Familiar Explanation of the Assemblies Shorter Catechism*, p. 109.

³ *Sermon on 1 Tim. iv. 8*, pp. 11-18 (1676).

⁴ *Christian Directory*, ii. 547.

⁵ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, iv.

⁶ Bridge, *How to Walk with God in Our Callings* in *Works*, vol. v (1673); Gouge, *The Young Man's Guide Through the Wilderness* in *Works*, ch. vi; Baxter, *Now or*

a deadly sin. Six hours, wrote Baxter, is the maximum amount of sleep which healthy Christians may allow themselves. Even morning devotions must not be too prolonged.¹ The ideal was Henry Ashurst, as Baxter pictured him in his funeral sermon. He rose at four o'clock in order to get through his religious exercises before the day's work began. Yet he spent very little of the money, so painfully earned, upon his own pleasures. He was not only diligent, but also abstemious.

Abstinence was the complementary virtue of hard work. For sensual indulgence and wastefulness ruined men's health, used up time, and took the mind off business, besides infringing the laws of God. Luxury prevented the poor from becoming rich, the rich from using their wealth properly, and both from achieving their salvation. It was, as we saw above, at the same time a personal and a social evil. On the other hand, frugality was a necessary act of gratitude to the 'Chief Owner', God.² Every one repeated what in most cases had long been stale platitudes about thrift and its opposite, flesh-pleasing.³ Recreations, agreed Baxter and Towerson, are good and necessary: but they must not be wasteful, nor are they to be indulged in for themselves alone. The end of recreation is not so much pleasure as refreshment, necessary if we are to work efficiently. The better service of God is the justification for sport and amusement. For the ungodly who do not try to serve God all recreation is sinful.⁴ It was this strictness about ordinary amusements which made it possible to level against Puritans the charge of precisionism. Refusing to compromise with the desires of the mere man, they earned for themselves the epithet of legalists, the prophets of Jehovah rather than Christ.⁵ In some cases, however, the founders of Nonconformity were less severe than their successors.

Never in Works, vol. vii (1671); *Life of Faith in Works*, vol. xii, pt. iii (1670); Swinnock, *Christian-mans Calling*, i, ch. xxvi; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, ii, ch. viii; Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxiii.

¹ *Christian Directory*, ii. 565.

² *Ibid.* iv, ch. xxi.

³ For example, Adams, Thomas, *The Main Principles of the Christian Religion*, Eighth Commandment; Swinnock, *The Christian-mans Calling*, i, ch. xii.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, i. 460; *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, v.

⁵ Baxter, *The Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 359.

On the question of adultery they were adamant. It was not only a damning personal and social evil, as we saw before, but also one which wasted time and cost money. Baxter, in his capacity as physician of soul and body, cautioned the poor to tire themselves by labour, to eat cold herbs and drink cold water, in order to quench the fires of lust.¹ The law of God permitted no sexual irregularity.

But on the problems of drink and gambling divines of the seventeenth century were not so puritanical as some of their spiritual children. Dawdling in taverns, spending large sums for alcoholic beverages, and becoming intoxicated were strongly condemned by all clergymen, along with all other waste and sensuality.² But temperance was the aim, not total abstinence. Baxter pities the poor husbandman who had to drink water instead of beer³—he may have known of the diseases which came from impure streams and wells—and Clarke argued that a good draught of wine cheered the hearts of the dejected.⁴ Writing for the common seaman Flavell explicitly denied that he favoured teetotalling.⁵ That most uncompromising of men, John Bunyan, observed that not only was complete abstinence from alcohol not a religious virtue, but that it was sinful to make such things matter of religion without Scriptural warrant.⁶

Similarly, gambling was condemned when it was excessive and more than a man could afford. Baxter warned the poor to refrain from betting.⁷ But gambling with moderation, both Baxter and Towerson agreed, was lawful.⁸

Always logical, men like Baxter would never admit that

¹ G., S. T., *A Warning Piece to England* (1676); Bury, Edward, *England's Bane, or the Deadly Danger of Drunkenness* (1677); Baxter, *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, p. 16; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, ii, ch. xxvii.

² Gouge, *The Young Man's Guide*, in *Works*, ch. vii; *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 182.

³ *Poor Man's Family Book*, p. 363.

⁴ *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xix.

⁵ *A Pathetical and Serious Dissuasive from the horrid and detestable sins of drunkenness, swearing, uncleanness, forgetfulness of mercies, violation of promises, and atheistical contempt of death*, pp. 188-9. Printed at the end of *Navigation Spiritualized* (1681).

⁶ *A Vindication of Gospel Truths in Works*, ii, 201.

⁷ *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, p. 59; also Goodman, *The Old Religion*, p. 278.

⁸ *Christian Directory*, iv, 129; *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, v. Baxter even admitted that plays were not vicious in principle, although he had never heard of a good one being acted. *Christian Directory*, iii, 877-8.

a thing was sinful merely because it was sinful in excess. Individualists, unafraid of facing facts, they would never deny to man what was lawful because it might tempt him to do that which was unlawful. The true Christian altered his own soul and not his environment. Unlike Babbitt, he did not lock his cigars in a cabinet as an aid to moderation: he locked himself in his closet and prayed. Similarly, he did not attempt to change the social order from without: he made a personal appeal calculated to soften the hearts of the rich.

The third great virtue to be exercised in a man's calling was prudence or discretion. To walk with God in our calling, said Bridge, we must know the arts of it and labour with wisdom.¹ Only by acting prudently can we obey the Eighth Commandment which enjoins us to add to our worldly estates.² Only the discreet man would be able to follow Baxter's rule stating that the best Christian should choose the most gainful calling,³ and his more famous dictum requiring men to pursue, as a religious duty, the course which was most profitable.⁴ Ordinary common sense would require as much at any time: the difference is that common sense was now a moral virtue. Imprudent business dealings were ranked as sins along with idleness and intemperance.⁵

Most of the teaching about the duty of being discreet came from the Nonconformist divines. But Thomas Tenison, later the Archbishop, following the Pauline teaching, advised men to be prudent in order to have money for alms. Learn to be skilful, account accurately and often, do not hesitate to bargain or to examine the reckonings of your creditors, he counselled. Above all, keep matters of business under your own direction.⁶ Tenison's advice, however, was lacking in moral fervour: to account properly was not a virtue, as Baxter would have said, but sound worldly wisdom. Prudence was not so much a religious virtue as a casuistry which reconciled temporal and spiritual interest. The most worldly

¹ *How to Walk with God in Our Callings*, pp. 82 ff.

² Alleine, *A Most Familiar Explanation of the Assemblies Shorter Catechism*, p. 109; Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, iv.

³ *Christian Directory*, iv. 147.

⁴ *Ibid.* i. 450.

⁵ Baxter, *Poor Husbandman's Advocate*, p. 59.

⁶ *A Sermon Concerning Discretion in Giving Alms*, Easterweek, 1681, pp. 13-14.

and least religious definition of prudence came from an Anglican mystic, Thomas Traherne. 'Its designe', he wrote, 'is to make a mans self as great and glorious as is possible, and in pleasing all the world, to order and improve all advantages without incurring the least inconvenience: to reconcile our devotion, obedience and religion, to our interest and prosperity in the world.'¹ To Puritan ears, Traherne's definition must have aroused suspicions of the mystery of Jesuitism. For business and religion were not antagonists to be reconciled: religion embraced the whole of life, it was business, and it spiritualized temporal callings instead of compromising with them.² To show tradesmen and others how they might actively serve God in their work—for the mere avoidance of sin was not enough—Dissenters produced in the Restoration period a number of treatises on particular callings. They were specialized applications of the general principles relating to earthly occupations.

Of these, perhaps the most important was that by the Reverend Richard Steele entitled *The Tradesman's Calling*.

After rehearsing the reasons why every man should have a vocation, he went on to speak of the qualities of the godly tradesman. To work for God, he insisted, we must be prepared to give up expensive vices and avocations, spend the whole day in the shop, and devote all the strength of our minds and bodies to our trade. A servant's time belongs to his master, and the master is God. Discretion, a 'godly wisdom', which enables a good man to dispose of his outward affairs in the most commodious manner is also a requisite. *Proverbs*, he said, should be the handbook of tradesmen who wish to honour the Christian religion by their wise conduct of business.

As a matter of duty the religious trader must grasp all opportunities for profit, learn to judge of the characters of customers and dealers, balance risks against profits, and reckon his accounts regularly. With each of these rules Steele gave some pages of explanation, the whole forming a manual of practical business technique. The last rule dealt

¹ *Christian Ethics*, ch. xx, p. 315 (1675).

² See Gouge, *Young Man's Guide*, p. 380; Bridge, *How to Walk with God in Our Callings in Works*, vol. v.

with suretyship. It may not be unlawful to sign bonds for other men, he said, but never do it. If a friend asks, making it hard to refuse, use the excuse of a previous engagement to some near relative, 'which I would advise every prudent tradesman to make'.

The neglect of prudence in business affairs is not the greatest of sins, Steele admitted; but it is a sin for which God punishes men on this earth if not hereafter. The man who is truly religious will usually exercise 'grace in his calling'.¹

Another book by Steele was directed to farmers. Although agriculture is in itself a good calling, he wrote, yet it must be spiritualized. Like the tradesman, the farmer had to be diligent and thrifty; 'thy endeavours in thy calling should be as diligent as if thou wouldst win all the world . . .'.² But on the whole, husbandry seemed harder to spiritualize than trade. For one thing, farmers were poor, and Steele spent half his book in urging them to be contented. Furthermore, there was less opportunity on the farm to exercise the all-important virtue of discretion. About the best the husbandman could do was draw spiritual lessons from nature—the busy bee, the diligent ant, the patient worm.³ Paying rent might be considered as similar to paying dues to the 'Great Landlord' on high.⁴

Spiritualizing by analogy was carried to extremes by the pious Reverend John Flavell in his book for farmers. God sets off His chosen people as husbandmen enclose wastes; He pours grace on the elect as farmers spread manure on inclosures; he gathers them to his bosom as the harvesters reap the grain. The whole work was a collection of such similes.⁵ *Navigation Spiritualized* followed the same method. Just as different countries must share their natural resources by navigation, so saints must share their grace by helping one another.

Or again, sailors should secure their 'immortal souls in

¹ Most of the wisdom summarized is to be found in ch. v (1684).

² *The Husbandmans Calling*, esp. pp. 21, 24 (1672).

³ Ch. vi.

⁴ Ch. x, sect. 9.

⁵ The title is *Husbandry Spiritualized: or the Heavenly Use of Earthly Things*. There were many editions, the one of 1819 being edited by John Wesley. Tawney refers to two of Flavell's works in *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*.

the insurance-office above' as masters insure their ships. At the end of the book Flavell made a little excursion into the field of *belles-lettres*:

Your fishing fails, you wonder why 'tis so.
'Tis this (saith one) or that: but I say no;
'Twill ne'r be well, till you confess and say,
It is our sin that frights the fish away.¹

Flavell wrote another short work for mariners, *The Sea-man's Companion*, reminding them that God could see them sinning in foreign ports, and recommending contentedness. Trust in that Divine Providence, he wrote, which makes the waters buoyant in order that ships may float. His inspirational efforts were evidently much appreciated by seafaring men: Calamy records that the sailors of Dartmouth kept away the officers of the law until Flavell, who was preaching in a conventicle, could escape.²

Encouraged perhaps by Flavell's success, Edward Bury published *The Husbandmans Companion: containing one hundred occasional meditations, reflections, and ejaculations, especially suited to men of that employment. Directing them how they may be heavenly-minded while about their ordinary calling* (1677). Drone bees were to remind the farmer of idle beggars; ploughing might set him to thinking of graves.³

Still another handbook of religion for tradesmen was Dr. John Collinges's *The Weaver's Pocket-Book: or, weaving spiritualized. A discourse wherein men employed in that occupation are instructed how to raise heavenly meditations from the several parts of their work*. Collinges, who kept a conventicle in Norwich, addressed his book to his own parishioners. Like Baxter, he recognized that one of the blessings of the trade was that men could read and talk as they worked.

Writing, as the Preface said, in imitation of Mr. Flavell, Collinges thought that men who worked from four in the morning until late at night deserved special aids to their

¹ p. 126 (1682). This was also very popular, the last edition appearing as late as 1840. A similar book had been published in 1655 by John Durant, later ejected, entitled *The Christian's Compass, or the Mariner's Companion*.

² *An Account*, p. 220.

³ Professor G. N. Clark has drawn my attention to the fact that Flavell's idea of calling was not the usual one—here a calling is not a direct serving of God, but an activity which must be made holy by metaphysical meditation.

salvation. As the title implies, much of the work was devoted to analogies. God is a middleman who often 'takes day' but always pays well in the end; one strand of wool is weak, but many are strong—brotherly love unites Christians in everlasting strength; and as yarns need dye, so human actions need the blood of Christ. At the loom two men work throwing the shuttle back and forth, just as in society rights and duties are always found in the relations between two people, husband and wife, parent and child, or master and servant.

As one of the excellencies of the calling of the weaver Collinges spoke of the scope for ingenuity in inventing new clothes, new patterns, and new manufacturing methods. That the religious weaver would be the most ingenious and prudent could not be doubted, for it was God who enabled His beloved to invent, or to judge of markets.¹ The successful man was one who could say that God 'influenceth me to work better than my neighbour', and one who knew that customers were led to his shop by a divine hand. Lastly, God would never allow trade to fail if all weavers could be persuaded to spiritualize their work.²

The purpose of all this teaching on the subject of calling was to bring religion into the world. The traditional domain of the devil was to be conquered by the disciplined soldiers of God, and man's love of things to be overcome by the love of God. Unfortunately, the method by which all this was to be done was prone to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. The conqueror was apt to fall in love with his captive. Metaphor and simile might be useful devices for attracting the interest of men of business, but they were dangerous devices. For it is sometimes difficult to remember which of the things compared is the more important. Was it grace or manure which was honoured by the simile? The very language of preachers, intended to spiritualize commerce, tended to commercialize the spirit. Gouge spoke of trading with a stock of grace;³ his metaphor was elaborated by

¹ Exod. xxxv. 35 is his authority.

² *The Young Man's Guide*, p. 373.

³ See especially pp. 9-11, 26, 31, 98, 116, 152, and pt. i, ch. v. Collinges's work was published in 1675. Tawney mentions another tract for weavers, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, n., p. 325.

Bartholomew Ashwood for the benefit of his patron, Jeremy Halwey, merchant of Bristol. If we trade with heaven, he wrote, we can start with no capital, be certain of the highest return, and deal with the best of customers, Jesus Christ.¹ The good Christian, according to Christopher Jellinger, puts off sins as a merchant puts off wares.² The most glaring pedagogical error was committed by George Swinnock. The true Christian, he said, is like the good merchant whose mind is always on his business. Whenever he makes a visit, such a merchant inquires about prices and commodities, always seeking new opportunities for profit.³ The moral was that the Christian must ever be seeking his salvation. But it is not improbable that Swinnock's readers concluded that the best Christian was the one who discovered the best ways of investing his money. The transition from Puritan to solid bourgeois was easily completed.

Anglican defenders of the aristocratic order were quite naturally shocked by all this trading in religion. In a sermon on literary style for preachers, South complained of the vulgarity of Puritan metaphors.⁴ Eachard spoke with contempt of the mean and blasphemous imaginations of those who compared Christ to a shopkeeper dispensing white robes and the balm of Gilead.⁵ But Anglicans did not object to speaking of Christ as a gentleman.⁶

Divines would no doubt have been startled at the suggestion that their doctrine of the calling was mainly effective as an instrument for increasing profits. The primary object of their endeavours was to increase religion. Nevertheless,

¹ *The Heavenly Trade, or the Best Merchandizing* (1679).

² *The Spiritual Merchant* (1676). [Congregational Library.]

³ *Christian-mans Calling*, i. 31. This work was dedicated to Richard Hampden, son of John Hampden and friend of Baxter. Swinnock acknowledges the fact that Hampden supported him. Such charity, he added, was sending money to heaven by bills of exchange.

In the *Christian Merchant*, 1696, the anonymous author began by stating that 'The Complete Christian is very like a well accomplisht Merchant'.

⁴ *The Scribe Instructed*, Matt. xiii. 52, in *Sermons*, vol. iv.

⁵ *Grounds and Occasions of the Contempt of the Clergy*, in *Works*, i. 53. The genteel editor of Adam Martindale's *Life*, Canon Richard Parkinson, noted in his Preface that this 'work is entirely free from . . . that somewhat profane application of scriptural language to the common concerns of life which generally give so much offence to serious minds in the works of most of the Puritan writers of the period'.

⁶ Barrow, *Of Industry*, p. 149.

Anglican and Nonconformist alike were quite aware of the identity of the religious and commercial virtues, and of the help which religion gave to men of business. In fact, men were persuaded to become true Christians in order to better their trade.

Godliness can never be a hindrance to men of affairs, as some men falsely suppose, wrote Goodman.¹ As God is honoured by diligence, so He honours those who work with riches;² servants and children who are taught to love God will make the best helpmates.³ Tillotson was eloquent in a sermon on *The Advantages of Religion*, proving that God increased the wealth of the godly, both by special Providence, and by making religious graces conducive to worldly success.⁴ On the other hand, 'every vice is naturally attended with some temporal inconvenience'.⁵

The belief that the rules of religion and good business were one and the same, and the welcoming of this belief, was in part a development of that Calvinistic protestantism which was both ascetic and secular. But it was also a logical counterpart of the theory of natural religion. The world had been so constructed, ran the argument, that man might be good in order to be happy, religious in order to be rich. Morality and self-interest could be served by the same actions in this best of worlds. The argument, of course, could easily be reversed to prove that the rich were the religious, and the selfish the best citizens and Christians. But such was not the intention of the adherents of natural religion: they only wished to show that man ought to be good on the grounds of reason as well as faith.

The two currents of thought which united worldly success and religion, Puritanism and the newer naturalism, were not clearly separated at the Restoration. But in general, we may say that the Nonconformists who stressed the doctrine of the calling were the representatives of the former tradition,

¹ *The Old Religion*, pp. 124-34.

² Barrow, *Of Industry*, p. 14; Flavell, *Husbandry Spiritualized*, pt. i, ch. ii.

³ Stockton, Owen, *Treatise of Family Instruction*, p. 55; Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Fifth Commandment, pt. x; Lukin, *Chief Interest of Man*, p. 33 (1665).

⁴ *Sermon IV*, in *Works*, vol. iii, esp. pp. 53-4. Tillotson quoted Prov. viii. 21; x. 4, 9; xxii. 29.

⁵ *Sermon CVIII* in *Works*, ii. 55.

while the liberal divines of the Anglican Church were the most prominent exponents of the latter. The conception of the calling had itself been inherited from the early reformers; it had not been consciously thought out as an expedient to resolve the antagonisms between the desires of the *bourgeoisie* and the precepts of religion, although it had come to serve that purpose admirably in the England of Charles II. If religion and trade were twins, their twinship was not so much the product of a rational as of a miraculous providence. Reasonable divines such as Tillotson, however, saw nothing miraculous in the marriage of self-interest and virtue: it was merely natural in a world created by a rational God. By emphasizing this expedient union both the Church and commerce might be made to prosper.

Old-fashioned thinkers like Flavell continued to wonder at the miracles of God which made the virtuous to prosper. Do not trouble to examine second causes such as diligence and prudence, he wrote, for they are of no avail without the special Providence which watches over saints.¹ In a work written to prove that God often interferes with the natural course of events, he observed that many holy men had been drawn to a calling, especially suited to them, even against their wills and their parents' advice.² Collinges and Doolittle agreed that a divine hand guided the godly, and also guided customers to the shops of the godly.³ Never buy or sell, wrote the author of *Heavenly Trade*, without asking the advice of the Almighty in prayer.⁴ According to George Swinnock the rich man can never say that his own efforts were responsible for his success through the natural working of cause and effect; for the world is not like a watch which goes when the workman is away, 'but there is not the least wheel in the frame of nature which doth not depend upon God for its motion every moment'.⁵ Finally, Gouge asserted

¹ *Navigation Spiritualized*, ch. xxii; *Sea-mans Companion*, Sermon IV (1676).

² *Divine Conduct: or, the Myserie of Providence*, sect. 2, and pp. 13 ff. (1678).

³ Collinges, *Severall Discourses Concerning the Actual Providence of God*, Sermon VII, p. 95; *Weaver's Pocket-Book*, ii. 116. Doolittle, *Young Man's Instructor*, pp. 83-7 (1673); also, Lawrence, Edward, *Parents Groans over their Wicked Children*, Counsel 17 (1681).

⁴ Ashwood, p. 252.

⁵ *Christian-mans Calling*, i. 484; also Charnock, *A Discourse of Divine Providence*, in *Works*, vol. i.

that industry and thrift needed the blessing of God in order to bring success.¹

Churchmen on the other hand, although not willing to deny the existence of an intervening Providence,² asserted nevertheless that it acted but rarely.³ When speaking of the profitableness of being godly, they emphasized the natural cause and effect which were so designed that the virtues of business and of religion were the same.⁴ Even knaves, said Tillotson, ought to be virtuous 'with a crafty design to promote and advance more effectually their own interests'.⁵

Preaching to the Lord Mayor, John Sharp spoke the comforting words, that 'so far as the getting of riches depends upon human endeavours, so far as it is an art and falls under precepts and directions, no man alive can propose a better expedient in order thereto than a serious practice of religion'. He went on to point out in detail just how the religious virtues of prudence, diligence, and frugality make the successful business man. He also mentioned that the sensuous pleasures of Christians were increased by temperance.⁶

The most elaborate discussion of the connexion between religion and interest was that by John Wilkins, bishop, scientist, Fellow of the Royal Society, and disciple of natural religion. Wilkins died before his work, *Of the Principles and Duties of Natural Religion*, was published, and Tillotson prepared it for the press. In the Preface he wrote that Wilkins had intended to prove that virtue made men happy. 'And surely nothing is more likely to prevail with wise and considerate men to become religious, than to be thoroughly convinced that religion and happiness, our duty and our interest, are really but one and the same thing under several notions.'

¹ *Christian Directions*, ch. xii.

² Goodman, *The Interest of Divine Providence in the Government of the World* (1683).

³ Barrow, *Sermon LVII in Works*, iv. 263; *Of Industry*, pp. 14-16; Barrow was a mathematician and a scientist. Glanvill thought that the universe was governed by natural laws which were never broken by divine intervention; *Philosophia Pia*, pp. 109-10 (1671).

⁴ Barrow, *The Profitableness of Godliness in Works*, vol. i.

⁵ *Sermons I and X in Works*, i. 10, 78-9.

⁶ *Sermon on 1 Tim. iv. 8*, pp. 10-20, 31 (1676).

After proving that religion was well founded on the evidences of reason and history, and not a superstition arising from fear, publicly allowed by wily priests and legislators, Wilkins proceeded to explain how the practice of religious duties was connected by a chain of natural causation to the achievement of human happiness. One element in that happiness was wealth. But riches, he continued, are either relative or absolute. A man may be relatively rich in comparison with his neighbours, or absolutely rich in that he has enough for his wants and is satisfied. When we say that religion brings wealth, we mean wealth in the absolute sense, without any destruction of ranks and degrees. Thus a farmer and a nobleman, each of whom has enough to satisfy the requirements of his condition, and is contented thereby, may both be called rich men. It should be noted, Wilkins added, that when the Bible says that poor men are the special children of God, poor is not used in the absolute sense of being in actual want. The favourites of the Almighty are rather those men of any class who have less wealth than is needed to keep up their rank, and therefore have no superfluity with which to sin. On this basis Wilkins would have considered as poor a nobleman with the income of a yeoman.

That religion tended to make men rich, by recommending as virtues the arts of good husbandry, was easily proved. There remained, however, the difficulty of charity. How could the Christian, who was bound to give away so much in alms, ever be rich? Here the distinction between absolute and relative riches became useful. In comparison with unbelievers who were not charitable the Christian was at a disadvantage. But, absolutely, he could still be rich. For a man was not required to give away what he needed to maintain himself according to the needs of his station. Furthermore, charity brought that satisfaction of mind which was necessary for any man to be rich. No matter how much wealth an individual might possess, he could never really be rich if he did not know how to spend his wealth so as to bring pleasure and contentment to himself. Hence the charitable could be richer than the miserly.

By the laws of nature the religious life must be the happiest, concluded Wilkins. Even heathens, although they

may be damned hereafter, are certainly better off on this earth if they are moral.¹ Men should be virtuous to achieve their own individual good and the welfare of society.

Thus Anglican and Nonconformist, starting from different bases, met at the journey's end. The Puritan instructed Christians to serve God by being good men of business; the Anglican instructed business men to serve themselves by being godly. Earthly interest was, of course, not the best motive for being religious: man should work for God first, and his own welfare only by the by.² But by making the service of God to come first divines did no injury to business. On the contrary, sound economic practice was elevated from the realm of common sense to the heights of heavenly duty. 'Here only is the difference between our consideration of good husbandry, and that of the worldly man, that whilst the latter intends it only for the securing to himself this worlds happiness, we on the other side, recommend it as a duty laid upon us by the Almighty. . . .'³ Thus the apostles of faith and the prophets of reason agreed that godliness was profitable. The capitalist spirit which Weber found in the works of Benjamin Franklin may well have been the product of the age of reason as well as of the Reformation. For Franklin was more a child of the Enlightenment than he was a Christian. The expedience of virtue was a doctrine of rational theology.

The practical effect of this teaching, both Anglican and Puritan, was to increase the reputation of the commercial and industrial classes. Among Churchmen, it was just those adherents of natural religion, like Sprat, Glanvill, and Stillingfleet, who were the most ardent defenders of the sober, trading part of the nation.

It was quite obvious to every one that gentlemen and paupers were not laborious, frugal, and diligent. On the other hand, business men, whether great merchants like Henry Ashurst, or the petits bourgeois of Kidderminster, were eminent in the exercise of these virtues. Or they were in the process, at any rate, of becoming so. In the year 1777,

¹ Ch. iv deals with riches, and ch. ix contains the conclusions.

² Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxiii.

³ Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, vi.

the historian of Worcestershire wrote that Kidderminster was a flourishing town, thanks to the 'industry, frugality, and simplicity' of the people, who had learned these habits from Richard Baxter. It is a well-known fact, said Nash, that under Baxter's pastorate Kidderminster became noted for decency and piety.¹

Since religion was so helpful to trade, and since success in a calling was an indication of the presence of heavenly grace, it was easy to fall into the error of identifying the good Christian with the good business man. Theoretically, of course, it was possible for men to be poor and good at the same time: God did not always give riches to His saints. But, other things being equal, the man of substance should be the virtuous man; beggars were not the favoured proprietors of the Kingdom of Heaven. Even the wealthiest merchants might be the very best servants of the Almighty if they maintained the frugality, diligence, and prudence which had made them rich.

Riches were lawful, if dangerous; and the pursuit of wealth was a Christian duty, provided that the end was the better service of God. Although worldly success is not the thing to be desired most, it is a good for righteous men.²

So long as the rich man maintained his standards of personal morality, he was on safe ground ethically. For the individualistic Christianity of the Restoration did not recognize that a moral man might be placed in a social position where it would be impossible for him to act righteously. Nor did divines admit that it was possible for the social order to be immoral and unjust even if every individual was as just as possible. So long as a man's relationship to God was firmly

¹ Nash, Treadway, *Collections for the History of Worcestershire*, 1781-2, ii. 43-4; quoted in Powicke, *Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter*, 1924, p. 39. Nash gives some interesting statistics which, if accurate, are evidence that Kidderminster was in 1677 a town of small owners. At that time there were in the town 157 master weavers, 187 journeymen, and 115 apprentices. Only one master had seven looms, the majority having two or three. Thus the proportion of employers to employees was about one to two. And as some of the apprentices and journeymen would become master weavers in the course of time, it is obvious that a mass proletariat did not exist.

² Baxter, *Christian Directory*, i. 450; Lukin, *Chief Interest of Man*, p. 32; Tillotson, *Sermon XXXVI in Works*, i. 253. Divines had abandoned the belief expressed by William Perkins that a man must stop acquiring when he has enough to keep up his rank; *Works*, ii. 125-6.

established all was right with the world. The emphasis was on personal rather than social salvation. If it made little difference that a man was poor, it was also of no importance that he was rich.¹ The Christian worked hard, not so much to bring the blessings of plenty to his fellow men, as to secure his own happiness in another world.

In the end both the preachers of faith and the expounders of reason were carried through the door in the side of the hill, just as they had reached the heavenly gates. The spirit of religion proved to be the spirit of capitalism. The doctrine of expediency showed that vice was more useful than virtue.² Religion invaded the world and was made worldly.

¹ Brooks, Thomas, *An Arke for All Gods Noahs*, pp. 457 ff. (1662); Annesley, Samuel, *Sermon I in Morning Exercises*, iii. 8-10; Tillotson, *Sermon LXXIII in Works*, i. 543.

² Abbey and Overton, *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, 1878, i. 330 ff.; Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, ii. 110, 164, 291.

II FAIR DEALING

‘THE Eighth Commandment’, wrote Joseph Alleine, ‘requireth the lawful procuring and furthering the wealth and outward estate of ourselves and others.’¹ The word ‘lawful’ was, of course, essential. Cheating in the business of buying and selling was just one more kind of theft, and as such it was considered in every catechism, under the heading ‘Thou shalt not steal’.² Just dealing was as necessary a virtue of the spiritual merchant as were prudence, thrift, and hard work.³ When an Anglican preacher denounced sinful trading before the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, the latter no doubt agreed with his statements, in principle, although they may have disagreed as to what particular kind of trading was unjust.⁴

From one point of view the necessity of being honest was an impediment to growing rich. But reason could prove, and experience verify, that honesty was the best policy.⁵ In the long run, as Tillotson observed, the unjust man will be found out, his credit will fail, and his trade will shrivel. As the Wise Man said, Prov. x. 9, ‘He that walketh uprightly walketh surely, but he that perverteth his way shall be known.’ The good man, by the very nature of things, has the greatest reason to hope for success in worldly affairs.⁶

The task of applying the general rules of justice to the particular cases was beset with the greatest difficulties, difficulties which were all but insurmountable. In the first place the science of casuistry had been discredited by Pascal.

¹ *A Most Familiar Explanation of the Assemblies Shorter Catechism*, p. 109.

² e.g. Boughen, Edward, *A Short Exposition of the Catechism of the Church of England* (1673); Sherlock, *The Principles of the Holy Christian Religion*.

³ Collinges, *Weaver's Pocket-Book*, p. 149; Swinnock, *Christian-mans Calling*, i, ch. xxvi; Tillotson, *Sermon CLII in Works*, ii. 343; Bridge, William, *How to Walk with God in Our Callings in Works*, vol. v.

⁴ Pargiter, Thomas, *A Sermon before the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor and the Court of Aldermen*, 23 July 1682.

⁵ Tenison, *A Sermon Concerning Discretion in Giving Alms*, Easterweek, 1681, p. 14.

⁶ *Advantages of Religion in Works*, iii. 53-4; *Sermon XLII in Works*, i. 285; also Gouge, *The Young Man's Guide*, p. 383; *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 244.

Although they were the most able casuists in Christendom, the Jesuit fathers had in many cases become entangled in the meshes of their own subtle reasonings.¹ At least, that was the opinion of two of the dissenting divines, David Clarkson and Samuel Clarke.²

Nevertheless, cases of conscience had to be solved, however dangerous the attempt might be. For one thing, the wicked influence of papists had to be counteracted by sound Protestant theology, practical as well as theoretical. It was a constant complaint that there was a dearth of good casuistry in England.³ Again, individuals could not be depended upon to apply general principles to their particular business. Men, said Towerson, are neither wise enough nor good enough to be their own casuists.⁴

A second difficulty which faced those writers who wrote cases of conscience for men of affairs was ignorance. A Cambridge don, and a future Bishop of Chester, preaching to congregations of tradesmen, both admitted that they knew too little of the mysteries of buying and selling to judge of them in detail.⁵ The bishop to be, Cartwright, added an &c. to his list of unfair business practices, lest his auditors laugh in their sleeves at his ignorance. No wonder that honest merchants who heard him thought themselves libelled. But it was undoubtedly true that the Christian minister had a hard time guiding men in paths to which he was himself a stranger. The definition of exact righteousness in contracts, wrote Tillotson, is no easy problem; and it is 'to be handled very modestly by such as acknowledge themselves unacquainted with the affairs of the world, and the necessities

¹ Robertson, *Rise of Economic Individualism*, 1933, chs. iv, vi. Father Brodrick's reply, *The Economic Morals of the Jesuits*, 1934, is like the casuistry it defends, ingenious, but not wholly trustworthy.

² Clarkson, *The Practical Divinity of the Papists in Works*, vol. iii; Clarkson refers to Pascal's *Lettres*; Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, 'To the Christian Reader', refers to *The Mystery of Jesuitism* (2nd ed., 1658), a popular English translation of Pascal.

³ Clarke, *ibid.*; Taylor, Preface to *Ductor Dubitantium*; Baxter, Advertisements to the *Christian Directory*; Fuller, *Holy and Profane State*, 'Character of a Faithful Minister' and 'Life of Perkins' following; Herbert, George, *The Country Parson*, 1905 (G. H. Palmer's edition), i. 219. I owe some of the above references as well as other suggestions to the kindness of Dr. Walter Houghton of Harvard College.

⁴ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, ii.

⁵ Kemp, Edward, *A Sermon preached at St. Maries in Cambridge*, 6 September 1668, pp. 3-4; Cartwright, *The Danger of Riches*, pp. 12-13, and Epistle Dedicatory (1662).

of things, and the particular and hidden reasons of some kind of dealings. For he that is ignorant of these may easily give rules which will not comply with the affairs of the world. . . .¹ If ministers forbid that which is just, tradesmen will either ignore the prohibition, or, if they heed, the psychological effect will be bad—they may be unnecessarily touched with a sense of sin. On the other hand, injustice must not be excused. Therefore, he concluded, 'I shall content myself with speaking of those things which are clear and evident, though they be but general, rather than venture out of my depth by descending into particulars, and such things as are out of my notice'. Besides, too much subtlety teaches men, not how to avoid sin, but how to come as near to it as possible, and yet be saved.¹

Whether because they distrusted the logical and deductive method of formal casuistry, or because they were not sure of their own knowledge, most ministers of the Restoration followed the example of Tillotson. Few men attempted to solve cases of conscience about trading in such detail as did Baxter in the Fourth Part of the *Christian Directory*. Practical theology was dealt with briefly in sermons and essays which repeated old formulae, kept within the bounds of the obvious, and appealed to charity wherever it appeared impossible to apply rules of justice.

The most obvious sin was deliberate fraud. In selling and buying, tradesmen were not to use false weights and measures, to adulterate their wares, or misrepresent their goods in any way. In credit transactions, borrowers ought not to make false statements about their assets, refuse to pay their debts at the appointed time, or escape payment by fraudulent bankruptcy. Lenders ought not to retain pledges when the ransom has been paid. In general, forgery, embezzlement, and common lying are forbidden.² All of these practices, of

¹ *Wherein lies that exact righteousness which is required between man and man?* Sermon X in *Morning Exercises*, i. 204–5, 209.

² The following references are typical: *Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 243–51; *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, p. 226; Comber, *Companion to the Temple*, Eighth Commandment, iii. 34; Brooks, *London's Lamentations*, i. 88–9; Gouge, *Young Man's Guide*, p. 381; Barrow, *Exposition of the Decalogue in Works*, vii. 494; Williams, William, *The Necessity and Extent of the Obligation, with the manner and measures of Restitution* (1682). Clarkson accused the papists of allowing traders to conceal defects in order to get a just price for their wares, *Practical Divinity of the*

course, were sins which had been, and are still, condemned in the name of common honesty. Most of them are punishable by law. By their insistence upon them, divines did a service to society, facilitating economic transactions and making possible an extension of credit. If the reasonable man will be honest because it is expedient, as the utilitarians maintained with some truth, the unreasonable requires the stimulus of belief.

Another group of economic sins, just as vicious as fraud, were those by which one man took unjust advantage of another's necessities. Of this kind were all sorts of monopolies, and the sin of profiting by another man's gross ignorance. In other words, divines were following medieval example in condemning engrossing, forestalling, regrating, and robbing the ignorant. The implication was that the prices charged in these cases were too high. The difficulty was in determining the standard by which prices were to be judged. It was a simple matter to know that the man who held his neighbours to ransom was a sinner:¹ it was harder to define his sin with exactitude. Few men attempted a definition.

Every tradesman, of course, was expected to buy at one price and sell at a higher. So much was perfectly lawful. The question was: How much higher should the selling-price be? It was obvious that the needs of customers could not be the main criterion for judging, because sellers were not bound to share the poverty of the lazy, the imprudent, and those who had been struck down by an act of God.² Prices could not be adjusted to suit the needs of charity. Secondly, it was impossible to set a definite percentage of profit. Ministers were aware of the existence of economic laws, such as supply and demand, which made it necessary that prices should fluctuate. Business men were not asked to ignore forces which they could not control.³ It was apparent that if a man

Papists, p. 166. Baxter, however, was prepared to grant as much, *Christian Directory*, iv. 121.

¹ General condemnations are found in the following works: Clarkson, *ibid.*, p. 162; Cradock, *Knowledge and Practise*, ii. ch. ix; Collinges, *Weaver's Pocket-Book*, ii. 150; Tillotson, *Sermon CXVI* in *Works*, ii. 84; Cartwright, *Danger of Riches*, pp. 12-13; Gouge, *Young Man's Guide*, pp. 381-2.

² *Christian Directory*, iv. 122-3; Tillotson, *Sermon X* in *Morning Exercises*, i. 208.

³ Tillotson, *ibid.*, p. 206; Steele, *Tradesman's Calling*, p. 107; Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxii; *Christian Directory*, iv, 122. *The Whole Duty of Man*, pp. 252-3,

lost money by a fall in prices, he should be allowed to make it up when the market was high.¹ In short, rigid standards such as the cost of production or customary prices were useless where an impersonal market existed, and they were not insisted upon by divines.

In those places and times where the market was in working order, and was not subject to the control of an individual, ministers accepted almost without reserve the market-price as synonymous with the just price. 'The market-price is generally the surest rule', wrote Steele, 'for that is presumed to be more indifferent than the appetites of men.'² If sales are regulated by law, said Clarke, then commerce is a simple matter. Otherwise the ordinary price-level with its fluctuations is the standard to follow.³ Such an opinion was not a new and revolutionary theory of just price: Clarke copied it almost verbatim from Bishop Hall's *Cases of Conscience Practically Resolved*.⁴ Baxter also referred to the case of government regulation, 'as on bread and drink with us'. That was, however, not a sufficient rule, and he added, 'If you go to the market, the market-price is much to be observed'.⁵ So much Baxter conceded in 1664 or 1665. But by 1683 he had gained confidence in the justice of the values set by free competition. In the *Catechising of Families*, he wrote, 'give the true worth, that is, the market price for what you buy . . . neither ask nor desire more than the said price for what you sell'. There was one exception to these rules, namely, articles which had some peculiar personal value to the seller might be sold at a higher rate, providing that the buyer understood he was paying extra for sentimental values. But the principle of the market value was plainly stated.⁶

In his sermon on just dealing preached at the morning exercises in Cripplegate Tillotson also accepted the rule of the market. 'Commutative justice', or 'the equality of things contracted for', he said, are not useful criterions, 'for value is not a thing absolute and certain, but relative and mutable'.

is ambiguous; it is possible that the author did recommend a fixed percentage of profit.

¹ Tillotson, *Sermon X* in *Morning Exercises*, i. 205.

² *Tradesman's Calling*, p. 107. See Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 244-5.

³ Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxii.

⁴ See also Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 40-1.

⁵ *Christian Directory*, iv. 121, 122.

⁶ Eighth Commandment, p. 229.

Wherever there is a free market, the price it sets must be taken as the true value; other rules must be made for cases of monopoly. Where commodities are freely competed for, 'there is an ordinary and usual price of them known to the understanding persons of every profession: if I be out in this, the matter of gain will be more uncertain than I thought on'.¹

To those moralists who objected that the acceptance of the market-price as the just one was in reality an abandonment of ethical principles, was, in fact, a vicious separation of religion and economics, Tillotson replied with the stock *laissez-faire* answer.

'The market is usually more reasonable than the particular appetites of men; and though every man be apt to get as much as he can, yet men generally have an appetite to sell, as well as to sell dear, and that checks this; so that he that governs himself by the market prices, not catching at particular advantages, seems to me to follow the safest rule.'²

Confronted by the impersonal laws of economics which in fact determined prices, advised by honest traders that these prices were just, assured by economists that free competition was a natural check on the greedy and the avaricious, ministers had every reason to accept whole-heartedly the morality of the market-place. There was no alternative, unless they were to advocate a revolutionary reorganization of the social structure, unless they were to be utopians. When the laws of the market prevailed, beyond the control of the individual, practical moralists acquiesced.

But the market, created by the relatively free competition of a large number of tradesmen, did not always prevail in the England of the seventeenth century. In one form or another, monopoly conditions, in which one man or a small group of men could control prices within a wide range, were common. Craft guilds, regulated companies, and patents of monopoly still existed. But these great monopolies were, except in some few instances, on the wane, along with other forms of government control of industry.³ In any case, the arguments for and against were highly technical; and these monopolies were matters of state policy with which divines could not

¹ *Sermon X in Morning Exercises*, i. 205-6.

² *Ibid.*, p. 206.

³ Lipson, *Economic History of England*, chs. ii and v.

lightly presume to meddle, except to lay down the general principle that oppressive engrossing was sinful.¹

There was another kind of monopoly, however, to which moral principles could be applied by each individual. Owing to the lack of easy transportation, fire, plagues, wars, sickness, and other accidents, and sometimes by design, free competition over a wide area was often hampered or prevented. A man found himself in the position of a monopolist with regard to his neighbours. In the Middle Ages monopoly was often the rule and a free market the exception;² in the seventeenth century, according to Tillotson at least, monopolies were the exception in ordinary middle-class business;³ to-day they are even less important in the realm of small business, however powerful they are in the field of great capitalist trade and industry. But any one who has any acquaintance with small communities must know of the petty monopolies which still exist: for example, the butcher who, having sold all his sweetbreads, needs more to supply a regular customer, must buy some from his competitor. He hopes that the latter will not take advantage of his necessity to charge an exorbitant price. More serious cases arise from time to time among neighbours. In the Restoration period the Fire and the Dutch War produced a situation in London in which extortionists thrived. London was said to be on the verge of revolt because of the rise in prices, and the government had to take steps. Part of the trouble was simply lack of an adequate supply. But part of it was caused by the unreasonable and unmerciful profiteering of men like Sir Edmund Berry Godfrey who took undue advantage of the necessities of the poor; he was reprimanded by a committee of the House of Commons.⁴ Perhaps the Commons were stimulated to act by the complaints of clergymen.⁵

¹ Collinges seems to have approved of some sort of guild control over trade, *Weaver's Pocket-Book*, ii. 150-1.

² Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 38-9.

³ *Sermon X in Morning Exercises*, i. 206.

⁴ Lipson, *Economic History*, ii. 145-9.

⁵ Stillingfleet, *Sermon*, preached to the House of Commons after the Fire of London, in *Works*, i. 4; Ellborough, Robert, *London's Calamity by Fire* (1666). Seth Ward wrote to Sheldon of the distress caused in Exeter by the loss of the London market for kersies due to the Fire and war; Add. MS. C. 305, f. 152 [Bodleian].

For buying and selling under these conditions where no free market existed, some standard of just price was necessary. It seemed obvious to all righteous men, whether ministers or tradesmen, that in such exceptional circumstances it was wrong to extort the highest price possible, taking advantage of others' necessities.¹ Especially was this unjust when the victims were poor men: Baxter was willing to concede that a moderate advantage might be taken of the rich.² For these cases where the market exercised no automatic control, divines attempted to define other standards.

In the first place, the market-price was still a useful criterion in exchanging common commodities which by accident had fallen into the temporary control of one individual. As Tillotson advised, follow the market-price, 'not catching at particular advantages'. In other words, the competitor above should sell sweetbreads to the first butcher at the usual market-price.

For commodities which had no such usual value a good rule was to take a moderate profit. Tillotson suggested 10 per cent.³ Clarke observed that risk and labour should be considered as well as cost price in determining a reasonable profit.⁴ Steele agreed that men might take a moderate gain.⁵

Still a third rule was to set a price which made it possible for both buyer and seller, supposing the former was going to resell the article, to profit. This appeared to be a reasonable interpretation of the command to do unto others as you would have them do unto you.⁶

Finally, there was always the obligation to be charitable. To sell cheaply to the poor was just one way of giving them alms. Baxter emphasized more than once that the trader was bound to consider the financial circumstances of the person with whom he dealt. If a seller foresees a fall in prices, he need not inform the buyer who is his equal or richer; but he ought to tell a poor man.⁷ Charity, of course, did not require a man to sell cheaper or at a loss to all the poor who might

¹ Clarkson, *Practical Divinity of the Papists*, p. 162; Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxii; *Christian Directory*, iv. 121.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 120, 121.

³ *Sermon X in Morning Exercises*, i. 206.

⁴ Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxii.

⁵ *Tradesman's Calling*, p. 107.

⁶ *Christian Directory*, iv. 120; Tillotson, *Sermon X in Morning Exercises*, i. 205; Clarke, *ibid.*

⁷ *Christian Directory*, iv.

ask him. Just as in giving alms, charity was limited by the necessities of the giver, and the deserts of the recipient.

The striking feature of this teaching on the ethics of exchange is its sound practicalness. The injunctions to be honest, to follow the market-price, to use moderation where the control of free competition was absent, and to be charitable in all dealings, could all be observed by the individual, without running counter to the impersonal economic forces over which the single tradesman could exercise no influence. They were rules which could and did serve as practical guides for a nation of small manufacturers, traders, and some small farmers, for whom the market was an inescapable master in most cases. These men could be honest at all times, and charitable, especially in the case of petty and accidental monopolies which were regarded as the exception and not the rule. In no way did any of this teaching represent a tendency to exempt economics from regulation by a code of ethics, except in so far as it recognized the plain fact that the individual was powerless in certain cases. Nor was it particularly conservative doctrine. Occasionally some remnant of medieval theory was retained: Baxter did fall back on one occasion to a very general denunciation of traders making profits by mere exchange without any idea of a just price.¹ But the usual counsels were admirably suited to the needs of the day. And wherever middle-class business is still dominant or even strong, the rules are still applicable. Even where the influence of religion has waned, small businessmen maintain the same ethical principles, however much practice may differ from theory.²

In the *Life and Death of Mr. Badman* Bunyan also attempted to fit his rules of just trading to the existing situation. No doubt he was a little old fashioned in some cases: he still thought that the market-price might be controlled to some extent by religious individuals.³ But for the most part

¹ Lecture at Pinners Hall, 2 September 1679, pp. 55-7, in Baxter MSS., *Treatises*, vol. iv [Dr. Williams's Library].

² In the small community in which I passed my boyhood, ideas of honesty, a just price where the market does not rule, and charity to neighbours are by no means absent. Ethical theory remains much as it was in the seventeenth century, just as the economic society is in many ways similar.

³ Everyman edition, p. 251.

he was concerned in denouncing ordinary cheats such as fraudulent bankruptcy and false weights.¹ He would not admit as a principle that a man might buy as cheaply and sell as dearly as he could. For to do so, he said, would mean that a man might take advantage of his neighbour's ignorance or necessity, might ignore all the rules of charity, and might cheat as much as he liked.² But this was not to say that the market-price might not be a good rule. The just trader did not ignore the constant fluctuations in prices which were as inevitable as the ebb and flow of the tide.³ In fact, Bunyan thought that the man who profited from another's needs was the monopolist who charged more than the market-price.

'For every man that makes a prey of his advantage upon his neighbour's necessities, to force from him more than in reason and conscience, according to the present price of things such commodity is worth, may very well be called an extortioner, and judged for one that hath no inheritance in the kingdom of God (1 Cor. vi. 9, 10).'⁴

To illustrate his point, Bunyan described two cases, both of which were typical of what might happen in seventeenth-century England, and both of which, moreover, were cases in which the individual could exercise control without defying the laws of economics. Of Mr. Badman it was said,

'could he get a man at advantage, that is, if his chapman durst not go from him, or if the commodity he wanted could not for the present be conveniently had elsewhere, then let him look to himself, he would surely make his purse-strings crack. . . .'⁵

Again,

'there is a poor body that dwells, we will suppose, so many miles from the market; and this man wants a bushel of grist, a pound of butter, or a cheese for himself . . .; but dwelling so far from the market, if he goes thither he shall lose his day's work, which will be eightpence or tenpence damage to him, and that is something to a poor man. So he goeth to one of his masters or dames for what he wanteth, and asks them to help him with such a thing; yes, they say, you may have it; but withal they will give him a gripe, perhaps make pay as much or more for it at home, as they can get when they have carried it five miles to a market, yea, and that too for the refuse of their commodity.'⁶

In short, Bunyan was scolding those people who took

¹ pp. 222, 234.

² pp. 245-8.

³ p. 249.

⁴ p. 243.

⁵ p. 242.

⁶ p. 243.

advantage of the imperfections of the competitive market in order to charge more than the market-price. He was not describing an unreal situation, nor was he advocating an impractical policy.

The realism of ministerial advice on the ethics of business is especially evident in the treatment of usury. Professor Tawney has described the importance of usury in the Middle Ages, when the social situation made much of the lending for gain synonymous with extortion and oppression. In the face of this fact the Church condemned all interest as sinful in principle. At the same time the great financial transactions of merchants, governments, and of the Church itself were tacitly excluded in practice from the general prohibition.¹ But as credit grew to be a normal part of the business of Europe the old attitude of universal condemnation began to appear unreasonable. Lending for gain was essential if trade and industry were to thrive; besides, it was clear that a man who borrowed in order to speculate or take advantage of some opportunity for profit was not being oppressed. The borrower was doing him a service for which he was glad to pay. Jesuit casuists were able, by subtle logical twists, to make allowance for these ordinary business loans without giving up the principle that all usury was immoral.² Protestants in England, following a lead given by Calvin, were inclined to make a distinction between usury which was oppressive and that which was not oppressive. Abandoning the authoritarian doctrine, divines began to think out a new theory based on common sense and the observation of the effects which interest had in practical business. For a long time men continued to quote the Bible, Aristotle, the Fathers, and canon law to prove that all lending for gain was damnable. But the opinion grew that the thing itself was neither bad nor good, but to be judged by whether it produced harmful or beneficial results. Still a third group of theorists ceased to think of interest in terms of moral good and evil, discussing only its expediency for the expansion of industry and com-

¹ Wilson, Thomas, *Discourse upon Usury*, 1925, Introduction, ch. ii; *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 41-55.

² Robertson, *The Rise of Economic Individualism*, ch. vi.

merce. Such was the point of view of Sir Thomas Culpeper's *Tract Against Usury*, 1621, republished by Sir Josiah Child in 1668.¹ The story of this development from the Middle Ages to the seventeenth century is well known.²

The divines of the Restoration had no revolutionary contribution to make to the discussion of borrowing and lending. Only two took up the rigid conservative doctrine of complete prohibition. Of these, one was a German pedant, and the other withdrew his assertions. Christopher Jellinger, born near Worms, was educated at the universities of Basel, Tübingen, Heidelberg, Leyden, and Geneva. A Presbyterian refugee from the Palatinate, he was invited to England in 1629 by John White, patriarch of Dorchester.³ At the Restoration he was ejected; in 1672 he was licensed to preach as a Presbyterian.⁴ In 1676 he published *The Usurer Cast in Four Books. The First Book (being onely here published, whilst the other three are prepared for the press) Containeth the Ground-work of the Whole Treatise*.⁵ Dedicating his work to John Gold, Merchant, Jellinger observed that he was reviving an old controversy. In fact, his arguments too were old; they would have been anachronisms fifty years earlier. Defining usury as a certain and set payment for the loan of goods which were consumed in using, he condemned it in all its forms. Partnerships where each shared losses as well as gains, payment for real damage incurred by loaning, and rent for land or other non-perishable goods were allowable. But by the unanimous authority of Scriptures and the Fathers, he said, lending money for a fixed and certain rent is sinful. The usurer is always a covetous thief and oppressor. To distinguish between biting and harmless usury will not do, for all usury is biting compared to free lending. Rehearsing all the traditional arguments, Jellinger ended with

¹ For the authorship, see Heckscher, *Mercantilism*, i. 288.

² Introduction to Wilson's *Discourse*, ch. iii; *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 41-57, 106-8, 180-3; also Lipson, *Economic History*, iii. 222-7; Cunningham, *Christian Opinion on Usury with special reference to England*, 1884; Robertson, *Rise of Economic Individualism*, ch. v.

³ For White, see David Ogg, *New England and New College, Oxford*, 1937.

⁴ Matthews, *Calamy Revised*, art. 'Jellinger'.

⁵ The book is to be found in the Congregational Library. I have not been able to find the later books. In *Usury Stated Overthrown*, p. 233, Jellinger says he eventually published nine chapters.

a fierce denunciation of the wicked extortioners who lent money on interest.

Three years later another ejected Presbyterian minister replied to him.¹ Thomas Palk, preacher and schoolmaster in Devon, asserted in his Preface that interest was necessary if men were to be persuaded to lend the money required for the trade of the nation. Because they served the common good Christian lenders had to be defended from the indiscriminate attacks of Jellinger and his like. But, he added, not all gain is lawful, and we must not excuse uncharitable practices.

Palk used all the arguments of authority, reason, and expediency. He quoted, and sometimes misinterpreted, Calvin, Luther, Ames, Grotius, Bishops Hall, Andrewes, and Taylor, as well as Baxter. In many cases usury was no different in principle from leasing land. Biblical prohibitions applied to the Jews, but not to Christians. Finally, usury which was not oppressive, he said, increased the wealth of the country.

Jellinger replied immediately with a book of over three hundred finely printed pages. He quoted other passages from Calvin and Baxter to prove that they were opposed to certain gain. Egypt and Rome were ruined, he said, by extortioners, and Spain paid all her gold in interest to Italian bankers. Continuing his denunciations of usurers, he cited various books of marvellous providences to show the horrible fate reserved for these sinners.² The issues, however, were stale, and the arguments were dead. Dull and antiquated, Jellinger's tirades probably attracted little attention. The debate was continued by the anonymous author of *The Case of Usury further debated, in a letter to the author of usury stated*. Decrying the blood and thunder rhetoric of Jellinger, he surveyed all the reasons pro and con. Without asserting that all taking of interest was sinful, he came to the conclusion

¹ Palk, Thomas, *Usury Stated: Being a Reply to Mr. Jellinger's Usurer Cast. Whereto are adjoynd some animadversions on Mr. Bolton's and Mr. Capel's Discourses concerning the same subject*. Robert Bolton (1572-1631) left a MS., published in 1637 as *A Short and Private Discourse with M. S. Concerning Usury*. Richard Capel's (1586-1656) *Tentations, Their Nature, Danger, and Cure* (2nd ed., 1635), has a discussion of usury at the end. Both Bolton and Capel were Puritan divines who took a conservative view of the question. For Palk, see *Calamy Revised*.

² *Usury Stated Overthrown; or, Usuries champions, with their auxiliaries, shamefully disarmed and beaten* (1679) [Congregational Library].

that it was a doubtful practice which ought to be avoided by scrupulous Christians. Again nothing new was added to the discussion. But he did refer to a point which was missed by the other divines who wrote on the subject. If both borrower and lender profit, he said, usury may still be oppressive. For some one must pay, and that person is generally the consumer. He is oppressed by high prices which are the necessary result of usury. In order to pay interest on his loans the trader must overcharge his customers.¹ The author did not develop this argument, but it was significant as the type of analysis, with strict attention to the chain of economic causality, which was necessary if an effective criticism of the social structure was to be had. Personal ethics might be a guide for the individual, but they were not sufficient for the creation of a just society.

Another opponent of lending on interest was Samuel Shaw, dissenting preacher and master of the grammar school at Ashby-de-la-Zouche. Taking up the conservative position based upon the authority of Scriptures, Fathers, Councils, and the canon law, he asserted that arguments based on common sense and rational analysis could not prevail against the will of God. He pointed out that Calvin's limited definition could give little comfort to most usurers.²

In the end, however, Shaw capitulated. Apparently he received a strong reproof from Baxter: Baxter's letter is lost but the reply may still be read.³ In it Shaw admitted the familiar distinction between oppressive and beneficial usury, saying that he meant to condemn only the former.

The argument which seems to have had the most influence on Shaw is also found in other works of Baxter. It was that all usury among the Jews was oppressive because of the particular organization of their economic life. Since they had no trade or buying and selling for gain, the people of Israel had no need of credit except in cases of misfortune. Consequently, lending on interest was in most cases the same as extorting gain from the poor.⁴ The same argument was

¹ pp. 17-18 (1684).

² *The True Christians Test*, ii. 321-55 (1682).

³ Baxter MSS., *Letters*, vol. iii, sheets 288-9. Dated from Ashby-de-la-Zouche, 31 October 1681.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, iv. 126; *Catechizing of Families*, in *Works*, xix. 230.

repeated by Towerson and Stillingfleet.¹ In effect, it was that the Palestine of the Old Testament was not unlike the Europe of the Middle Ages when peasant and craftsmen in need were at the mercy of rich money-lenders. When this kind of usury was in question, divines united to condemn it.

This historical reasoning was reversed by Burnet in a passage of *The History of the Reformation*. Since there was little agriculture in Israel, he said, foreign trade was necessary in order to secure food. By prohibiting usury the law forced men to seek gain in trade and manufacture, and thus the country prospered and the people were fed. In later times, 'it could not easily appear where the immorality lay, of lending money upon moderate gain, such as held proportion to the value of land, provided that the perpetual rules of Christian equity and charity were observed, which is, not to exact above the proportion duly limited by the law, and to be merciful in not exacting severely of persons who by inevitable accidents have been disabled from making payment. This digression I thought the more necessary because of the scruples that many good and strict persons have still in this matter.'²

Although the arguments differed on points of fact, the method was the same. It was contended that rent for the use of money was not in itself sinful, but had to be judged according to the particular time and place. As a prebendary of Exeter said in a sermon before the Lord Chief Justice, 'they who urge texts of the Old Testament with so much heat against the present use amongst us, do not speak *ad idem*, if *ad idem nominis*, not *rei*'.³

All the usual defences were stated in one form or another, always with the proviso that extortion and oppression were sinful. Gain by lending was not different from gain by trade; usury was necessary if business was to prosper; orphans and widows would have no way to live if they could not lend on interest.⁴ Baxter cited the example of Mr. Foley, who 'did partly for himself and partly in charity take to use the monies

¹ *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, ii; *A Letter to a Deist* (1675), printed at the end of *Origines Sacrae*, 1836, vol. ii.

² ii. 192-3.

³ Wetenhall, Edward, *A Sermon Presenting the Miseries of the Clergy*, Exeter Cathedral, 26 July 1668, p. 12.

⁴ Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Eighth Commandment, ii; Baxter, *Christian Directory*, iv. 125-9; *Catechising of Families*, pp. 229-32; *A Paraphrase on the New Testament*, Matt. xxv. 26-7.

of many honest, mean people that knew not else how to live or to use it; and from a small estate he grew to purchase at least £7,000 per annum to himself and his sons. Was there any charitableness in this usury?¹ If Mr. Foley, who made 20, 40, and even 100 per cent. on his investments in iron each year, had not paid these people for money which they lent him, would not that have been unjust?²

In general, then, clerical opinion allowed usury where the borrower was not oppressed and ruined. Interest was regarded as lawful, but griping, biting, unreasonable extortion was prohibited.³ Martindale could discuss the technical problems of rates without reference to moral principles because he did not believe that all usury was sinful.⁴

Fixing their eyes upon the society of many small producers and a few great merchants, divines elaborated principles which could be successfully applied by each individual. Recognizing that payment for credit was necessary to keep the economic machinery oiled, they made no objection to that usury which seemed to have no ruinous result for the borrower. But where situations arose similar to those which were common in the Middle Ages, they damned the man who preyed on his neighbour's hard luck. The extortioner, sucking the blood of peasants and artisans who had to borrow because of bad harvests, sickness, fires, and so on, was despised just as he is still despised by respectable tradesmen and farmers. It is true that the churches no longer had much power to punish the unconscionable usurer; but they did not cease for that reason to regard him as immoral. Practically,

¹ *Catechising of Families*, p. 231.

² *Christian Directory*, iv. 126.

³ *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 241; Watson, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, p. 377; Barrow, *Exposition of the Decalogue in Works*, vii. 494; Comber, *Companion to the Temple*, iii. 34. Clarke, *Medulla Theologiae*, ch. xxii, is ambiguous; he may have taken the conservative view. Robert South charged a debtor interest on a loan; *Posthumous Works*, 1717, Last Will and Testament, p. 84. See also William Blackmore, in *Calamy Revised*, p. 60. Two older works which were reprinted and were popular during the Restoration also upheld the principle that mercy was the rule by which to judge usury; they were Bishop Sanderson's *Of Usury in Works*, 1854, vol. v, and Henry Hammond's *Practical Catechisme*, 12th ed., 1683, Eighth Commandment, pp. 314-18. Hammond also maintained that the market price should rule all buying and selling; *ibid.*, p. 303.

⁴ *The Country-Survey-Book: . . . with an appendix containing twelve problems touching compound interest and annuities*, 1702 (1st ed., 1681).

they could stir up opinion against him, insist upon the necessity of charitable loans, and direct the pious to establish trusts for young or needy tradesmen.¹ There is little evidence to show that men were more honest or charitable in business before the decline of the spiritual power. But the sense of personal duty and responsibility is one of the great contributions of Protestantism.

Wherever individuals had direct control over economic transactions, divines supplied them with a workable code of ethics. Rules of business morality could be applied in many instances by men of business just as they can be now in similar circumstances. The directions of ministers were calculated to produce some kind of rough justice in a world of middle-class business.

But there was an error in this teaching. The England of the seventeenth century was not strictly a society made up of independent producers. Whether divines recognized the fact or not, there was a war in progress between the great capitalist and the small master who was being reduced to a wage-slave. Injustice was often the result of that battle, and it could not be eradicated by an appeal to personal morality. For the individual had no control over the impersonal forces which were inherent in the economic organization, and which were the very forces making for injustice. If every man had been moderate in taking usury of the unfortunate, if every man had followed the market-price, and in unusual circumstances some standard of just price, there is no reason to suppose modern capitalism would not have come into being. The creation of a proletariat is not the result of personal dishonesty and oppression on the part of individual capitalists, although these may help in that process. Society was being transformed by the operation of economic processes over which single men had no influence. The small producer was losing his status through the working out of these processes in terms of the very market-prices and ordinary interest rates to which divines appealed as standards of business ethics.²

¹ Above, p. 135.

² On the gradual decline of the small master in the sixteenth and seventeenth

Of these developments, however, ministers had nothing to say. They did not attempt to establish some social control capable of dealing with economic forces which were larger than the individual. The author of *The Case of Usury* did suggest that the evils of usury might be real even though they were not immediately apparent to the particular lenders and borrowers. But he had no practical plan of action to offer. Most ministers ignored such problems altogether. It did not occur to Baxter, for example, that markets and credit facilities which made it possible for Foley to double his capital in a year, and for Henry Ashurst to amass a huge fortune, might result in social injustice. So long as they were honest and charitable, all was right: the impersonal forces of economics could not prevail, or would at least be harmless, if each individual was righteous. The point is well illustrated by Baxter's opinions on the subject of farm-rents. Again and again he insisted that charity should induce the rich landowner to allow his tenants to live decently. In those regions where high rents were so high that farmers could barely exist, he demanded that gentlemen abate rents below the market value. He predicted that fires of hell would consume merciless capitalists who, having bought up all the land in the county, scraped the bones of their tenants.¹ But it is significant that he said nothing against buying up all the land in the county, providing the farmers were allowed to live tolerably well. He saw no injustice in a system which distributed £10,000 a year to an absentee owner, so long as the tenants had £50. Charity demanded that there be a minimum income, but justice set no maximum limit. Where such disparity might lead, no one asked. Divines accepted the working out of the economic laws, tempering the resultant severity by inculcating a sense of personal duty and a feeling of pity.

That they should have done so was certainly almost inevitable. For the spokesmen of organized religion, bound by a thousand ties to the dominant classes of the community, influenced and limited as well as nourished by the intellectual

centuries, see Lipson, *Economic History*, ii. 4-9; iii. 247, 386-99; Unwin, *Industrial Organization*, pp. 199 ff.; Tawney, *Wilson's Discourse*, pp. 44-5, 58-9.

¹ *Christian Directory*, iv. 137, 140-2.

and material environment in which they lived, could not be expected to maintain a highly critical attitude in an age which was surging forward from triumph to triumph.

In the first place, any effective social control in the interests of justice would have to be organized by the State. But the State represented in many ways just those men who profited by injustice. In any case, control had been tried and it had failed. It was withdrawn partly, at least, because no one knew how to supervise wisely.¹

Secondly, whatever the State should or should not do was thought to be exempt from clerical control in theory as it was in practice. Policy was a matter for the Government to decide by itself. Progressives as well as sinners resented clerical shackles. 'I purposely forbear', said Baxter, 'to meddle with the sins of magistrates.'²

An even more important factor in determining the social philosophy of ministers was ignorance. Until they had at hand an intelligent analysis of the economic system, divines could not hope to formulate a satisfactory policy. Professor Tawney has written that 'the last of the schoolmen was Karl Marx'. If Marx was able to make a searching criticism of the injustices which were inherent in the economic structure of society, it was because he had first made a detailed study of how that structure functioned. But the divines of the Restoration had made no such study. Along with Tillotson, they had no choice but to accept the convenient belief that wickedness would cancel out wickedness, and that by a marvellous mechanistic process, all would be for the good. After all, it did sound reasonable, and experience proved that it was not wholly untrue.

Lastly, the material successes of the age were not to be despised. Wealth was increasing apace, and it was good. Having just emerged from the discomforts of a civil war which had threatened to be a social revolution, conservatives in their views of property and inequality, divines were not prepared to advocate policies which were revolutionary. The

¹ Cunningham, *The Growth of English Industry and Commerce. The Mercantile System*, 1921, p. 214.

² *Christian Directory*, iv. 137; *Reliquiae*, iii. 71-2; similarly, *Whole Duty of Man*, p. 291.

successes of the day were its justification; and Cumberland's axiom that no reasonable man would want to alter the *status quo* had some truth in his own age. Divines accepted the existing society, gave it a rationale, and softened its harsher elements by an appeal to mercy and charity.

PART IV CONCLUSION

IT was a commonplace opinion in the Restoration, as in every period, that piety was decaying, that religion was on the wane. Even the modern reader is tempted to agree that the religious mind of that time was growing feebler, had less red blood in its cells, than in the age before. If divines were still regarded as the leading thinkers, they somehow did less leading. Those men who looked to the future, whose ideas helped to shape that future, were more than likely to be laymen. Ministers did not look ahead, nor lay plans for what was to come. And because clerical thought moved slowly, it became, eventually, outmoded.

On the other hand, neither did clergymen cling to the worn-out social theories of the past. They did not ask men to follow impossible rules of conduct which had been devised to fit the needs of former days.

Finally, religious leaders did not abandon the world to the world, dividing the realms of business and religion into two separate kingdoms. Looking squarely and realistically at the structure of society in seventeenth-century England, they attempted to spiritualize and control it in the interests of the Good. Experience and reason, they thought, had taught them that they could not remake that social structure, nor did they wish to do so. What they could do was maintain it, and try to alleviate wherever minor, or irremediable, defects caused injustices.

In short, ministers of God wanted to see justice done within the framework of the *status quo*. For that purpose they preached of family duties, of the education of children, and of the duties of masters and servants; they described the merits of private property, of social classes, of industry and commerce, and they taught men of property, rank, and business the duties of their position. The rules, moreover, which clergymen laid down to regulate social life were for the most part quite practicable rules. Since they did not wish to rebuild the house, they were not critical of the foundations. They buttressed the base, and gave good advice for keeping

the superstructure in repair. For example, they did not condemn that usury which was a normal part of business life and which could not have been abolished without remaking the economic system; they did condemn that usury which was not so essential, and which seemed to be the result, not of impersonal economic laws, but of the rapacity of immoral men.

The social system which clergymen wanted to uphold was not of a piece. In broad outline it was an aristocratic society which had gone far towards becoming bourgeois. The divisions and the antagonisms between the two elements were reflected in the thought of clergymen, especially where men of business were the subject of discussion. Among Anglicans, aristocratic ideas were stronger; among Nonconformists social theory tended to be more bourgeois. But Anglicans were not reactionaries, nor were the Dissenters prophets of revolution. On fundamental principles they agreed. Their differences were as superficial as was the distinction between gentleman and citizen. Nor did they always differ, even superficially: Anglicans such as Towerson who had grown up in the Interregnum were less conservative than older Dissenters like Samuel Clarke.

In elaborating a social theory adapted to the society of their time, in stressing those virtues which helped in the expansion of English civilization, the clergy fulfilled their function as moral teachers. They paved the way for that increase in the production of material goods which is one of the triumphs of capitalism. To lament that they did so, to suggest that they should have undertaken a fundamental criticism of that system just as it was beginning to bear fruit, would be to misunderstand their calling, and to misunderstand the nature of historical development. A national clergy, one of whose practical functions was to inculcate the moral rules necessary for the very existence of their society, could not be at the same time utopians or revolutionaries.

APPENDIXES

I

WAR

THE seventeenth century saw the beginnings of modern armies and navies; and it was a century of battles. As Professor Clark has pointed out, there were only seven calendar years in which some European states were not at war.¹ In the reign of Charles II England fought the Dutch for more than four years. What had clergymen to say on the subject?

In the first place, very little was said about the cause of armed conflicts. Baxter complained of evil councillors and ambitious leaders like Alexander.² Another divine quoted St. Augustine to the effect that revenge, malice, hatred, and the thirst for power were the chief causes.³ In any case, war was sinful and unchristian.⁴ Churches did not accept the unethical opinion of mercantilist economists that imperialist conquest was a necessary and lawful part of foreign policy, although Glanvill was willing to civilize savages with gunpowder and artillery. Both he and Barrow, following Bacon, thought that foreign wars might have wholesome effects upon domestic morale.⁵

That some wars were lawful seemed obvious to all theorists, although Baxter said a just conflict was like a general council: it could be, but had there ever been, or would there ever be one?⁶ But it was generally agreed that nations might fight if the cause was righteous.⁷ Biblical texts to the contrary were explained away by plausible arguments from history and reason. The prophecy of Micah that swords shall be made into plowshares was merely figurative, according to Edward Pocock, the learned Professor of Hebrew at Oxford. Besides, he added, the prophecy was fulfilled at the birth of Christ, for the world was at peace under Augustus.⁸

¹ *The Seventeenth Century*, 1921, p. 98.

² *Christian Directory*, iv. 104.

³ Comber, *Companion to the Temple*, ii. 310.

⁴ Goodman, *The Golden Rule*, pp. 38-43; Pearson, *Exposition of the Creed*, pp. 130-1.

⁵ Glanvill, above, p. 163; *A Loyal Tear Dropt on the Vault of Our Late Martyred Sovereign*, 30 January 1667, p. 13; Barrow, *Sermon VII* in *Works*, v. 234; see also Sprat, *History of the Royal Society*, p. 404.

⁶ *Christian Directory*, iv. 187.

⁷ Adams, Thomas, *The Main Principles of the Christian Religion*, p. 107; Tillotson, *Sermon* preached before the House of Commons, 16 April 1690, in *Works*, iii. 426-7; Baxter, *How to Do Good to Many* in *Works*, xvii. 312-13; Watson, Thomas, *A Body of Practical Divinity*, p. 361; Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium*, in *Works*, ix. 480 ff.

⁸ *A Commentary on Micah* in *Works*, 1740, i. 29-30 (1679); similarly, Barnes Miles, *A Sermon*, 1682, pp. 8-9. Barnes was a Fellow of St. Peter's Hall, Cambridge.

Accepting, after Grotius, the fact of national sovereignty, ministers said that war was the only way of deciding serious disputes between nations. 'When they go into the field, it is but to plead their cause before God, with whom are the issues of war.'¹ Where there is no supreme judge men must resort to trial by battle. Unless a nation can defend itself, and inflict punishment upon unjust neighbours, society must cease, said Robert South. Between sovereign states there can be no judge but force. Of course, princes are not to wage unjust wars; but even so, a wicked prince may resist attack since he has not given up his right to self defence by any contract as ordinary subjects have. Yet, 'I suppose nobody will conclude the foregoing discourse to have been a commendation of war, much less an exhortation to it. It is indeed a lawful, but a sad remedy'.²

Only three men considered the problem of the duty of the subject who was ordered by the State to fight in an unjust war. Towerson and Richard Meggott, who became Dean of Winchester in 1679, decided that the subject must obey his prince in all cases. If the war were unjust, the responsibility and consequences belonged to the ruler.³ Baxter, however, refused to accept this theory. In the case of the war being clearly unlawful, the subject must not fight, although he may defend his country from the revenge of injured neighbours. Where the cause is doubtful, subjects ought not to enlist. But in the end Baxter's distinctions were of little use, for he said that it was usually the case that the subject could not determine whether the war was unlawful or not. And whether they ought to obey the command of governors when the case was doubtful he declined to say, on the grounds that governments did not tolerate such meddling by divines.⁴

The Second Dutch War was certainly unjust according to the theories of Christian ministers, and both Baxter and Burnet recorded after the event that it was a bad war.⁵ But at the time the Bishop of Lichfield preached a sermon at Whitehall 'To Crave a Blessing of God for His Majesties Naval Forces', in which he said that 'our enemies have not a spark of goodness in them'.⁶ John Dolben, Dean of Westminster and later Archbishop of York, at a thanksgiving service for the

¹ Laney, Benjamin, Bishop of Lincoln, *A Sermon preached at Whitehall*, 12 March 1665, p. 8; Pelling, Edward, *A Sermon preached to the Artillery-Company*, 21 October 1679; Comber, *Companion to the Temple*, ii. 312; Hackett, *Sermon on April 6, 1665, A Century of Sermons*, 1675, p. 860. Pelling was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.

² *Sermons VI, VII, VIII, IX in Sermons*, vol. x, esp. pp. 181 ff., 201, 203.

³ Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Sixth Commandment, ii; Meggott, *Sermon preached to the Artillery Company*, 13 September 1676.

⁴ *Christian Directory*, iv. 46-9.

⁵ Baxter, *Reliquiae*, iii. 16; Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, i. 356-8.

⁶ Hackett, John, *Century of Sermons*, p. 852.

victory of Lowestoft, said that 'he is unworthy to breath in England whose heart does not exult and triumph that the pride of our insolent enemies is in some measure mortified . . .'.¹ Similar patriotism was exhibited during the Third Dutch War.² One man in orders, the factious Henry Stubbe, was paid by the government to turn out war propaganda and atrocity stories which were not unlike those published during the Great War.³

In practice, then, clerical theory was of little use in dealing with the problem of war. As a theory, it had the merit of asserting that war was a moral problem, and of recognizing the fact of nationalism. But it failed to take into consideration the great political and economic forces which were the root causes, except in so far as it tacitly assumed that war was inevitable. No spark of internationalism lit the way towards a practical plan for peace; utopian hopes were stifled by the harsh reality of fact. Thou Shalt Not Kill could be applied only for the suppression of private murders, and of duelling.⁴

¹ *A Sermon Preached before the King on Tuesday, 20 June 1665*, pp. 12-13.

² Gregory, Francis, *The Right Way to Victory*, 22 June 1673. Gregory was a schoolmaster and minister; see the *D.N.B.*

³ See *State Papers Domestic*, 1672-3, pp. 319, 629. Stubbe published *A Justification of the Present War in the Netherland*, 1672, and *A Further Justification*, 1673.

⁴ Towerson, *Explication of the Decalogue*, Sixth Commandment, ii; *Gentleman's Calling*, pp. 136 ff; *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, p. 229.

II BAPTISTS

IN general, the Baptists did not differ in their social opinions from the main body of Nonconformists. During the Interregnum many of the radical reformers had been recruited from the Baptist churches, but the official organizations never sanctioned revolutionary policies.¹ Declarations and confessions of faith were issued in times of danger, after Venner's fiasco for example, disclaiming any subversive beliefs or any connexion with the Anabaptists of the Continent.² According to the *Humble Apology* published by both General and Particular groups after Venner's rising, 'that such evil opinions and practices are not natural or necessary concomitants or consequences of the doctrine about baptism, nor of any possible connexion with it, is easy to be discerned . . .'.³ In Baxter's opinion, 'most of them were persons of zest in religion and godly, sober people, and differed from others but in the point of infant baptism'.⁴

After the Restoration the General or Arminian churches lost many of their members to the Quakers, or the more conservative Calvinists. The revolutionary movement disappeared, and Baptists became quietists, whose social doctrines were not unlike those of the other free churches. Discouraged and defeated by the Restoration, the radical sects turned their attention towards spiritual religion and the inner life.⁵ The Baptist literature of the period contains very few references to social problems or ethics. I have found only one writer, for example, who urged that liberty of conscience would encourage trade.⁶ A petition from some men imprisoned at Maidstone for their religious convictions stated that property had been confiscated in defiance of the laws of God and Nature, but did not mention business prosperity.⁷

William Sherwin, one of the ejected ministers, expected to see the

¹ Brown, L. F., *The Political Activities of the Baptists and Fifth Monarchy Men*, 1912, pp. 58, 70-4; Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 227.

² *Confessions of Faith and Other Public Documents Illustrative of the History of the Baptist Churches of England*, E. B. Underhill, ed. 1854.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

⁴ *Reliquiae*, ii. 140; quoted in Gooch, p. 227.

⁵ Whitley, *A History of British Baptists*, 1932, pp. 84-5, 163; Brown, pp. 200 ff.; Troeltsch, *Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, pp. 714-16, 805, 807. Troeltsch gives the most complete summary.

⁶ Jones, James, *A Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, iii (1684).

⁷ *The Humble Petition and Representation of the Sufferings of Several Peaceable and Innocent Subjects Called by the Name of Anabaptists*, 1600, reprinted in the Hanserd Knollys Society, *Tracts on Liberty of Conscience and Persecution*, 1614-1661, 1846.

reign of Christ established on earth, but he rejected all attempts to anticipate that event by rebellion, urging instead that the rich should save themselves by giving a tenth of their incomes to the poor.¹ As a body of Christian brethren separated from the world of evil men, Baptists appear to have made provision for their own poor, and a layman, Richard Haines, was one of the prominent writers on poor relief and an advocate of workhouses.²

There are also records of Baptists disciplining their members in cases of drunkenness and dishonesty.³ In Bunyan's Meeting, one Richard Deane was cast out for selling deceitfully, and Edward Dent was cut off for contracting debts which he could not pay.⁴ At Broadmead in Bristol, Sister Syms was reprimanded for suing Sister Murray for a debt with interest. The complaint, however, was not of usury, but of going to law without first consulting the congregation.⁵

Including among their members the poor and illiterate, Baptists were critical of the educational system of the time. In the first place, they could not admit that learning was essential for the good man, for then, as Bunyan said, the poor could not be saved.⁶ Secondly, learned men in the past had oppressed true believers and deluded the people into giving them wealth and honour.⁷ It seemed obvious that there was no necessary connexion between religion and learning. For these reasons Baptists lagged behind the other Dissenters in providing educational institutions for their own members; they had no academy to train preachers until 1720.⁸ But the distrust of the learning of the time did not mean that Baptists opposed all education. They wanted on the one hand to separate religion from learning, and on the other hand, to democratize learning itself and relate it to the practical affairs of life.

¹ *The Word Written Concerning the Word Everlasting*, p. 32 (1670); *The Doctrine of Christs Glorious Kingdom (or the New Jerusalem State) Now Shortly Approaching*, 1672. There is no evidence that Sherwin was a Baptist; see Matthews, *Calamy Revised*.

² Bebb, pp. 141-2, 129-30.

³ Idem, pp. 60-3.

⁴ Brown, John, *John Bunyan*, pp. 195, 302.

⁵ *Records of a Church of Christ Meeting in Broadmead, Bristol, 1640-87*, Hanserd Knollys Society, 1847, p. 368.

⁶ *A Relation of the Imprisonment of Mr. John Bunyan*, p. 192, printed with *Grace Abounding*, edited by John Brown, 1888.

⁷ Collier, T., *A Compendious Discourse About Some of the Greatest Matters of Christian Faith*, 1682, Epistle; Dell, William, *A Testimony from the Word Against Divinity-Degrees in the University in Select Works*.

⁸ Whitley, *History of British Baptists*, pp. 182-4; *The Contribution of Nonconformity to Education until the Victorian Era*, 1915. Bampfield, Francis, *All in One: All Useful Sciences and Profitable Arts in One Book of Jehovah Aelohim*, 1677, maintained that the essentials of all the useful sciences were revealed in the Bible, and that all secular learning which proceeded from other bases was unlawful.

Collier was ready to admit that worldly knowledge which was properly controlled and directed could be of value to man. Dell, who was Master of Gonville and Gaius during the Commonwealth period when his books on education were written, was certainly not opposed to learning. His *Right Reformation of Learning, Schools, and Universities* urged the state to provide universal primary schools, grammar schools with technical studies in towns, and universities for teaching liberal arts in all large centres. Scholars, he wrote, should have a practical knowledge of useful sciences as well as a theoretical training. Far from being opposed to education, Dell wanted to see a thorough reformation of the school system along the lines marked out by the most advanced educational theorists of the period.¹ After the Restoration such radical programmes were abandoned by the Baptists as by every one else. Benjamin Keach published a spelling-book with 'a form for a bond, bill, or receipt; and a table showing the interest of any sums, etc.'² John Langston, an ejected preacher, published Latin and Greek selections from Christian authors to replace the pagan books in use in the grammar schools;³ Hanserd Knollys, a schoolmaster, also published texts for this purpose.⁴ And in the next century, Baptists took some part in the provision of technical and trade schools for the middle classes.⁵

On the whole, Baptists were not differentiated by their social doctrines from the other Dissenters, except in so far as they were more interested in the problems of the spirit than of the world. They followed the bourgeois development of the Protestant sects.⁶ Although Bunyan does not seem to have associated himself with the other leaders, his ideas, as we have examined them above, may be taken as typical of the group. One element in his thought, as in that of Baptists in general, is expressed in a sentence from *Grace Abounding*: 'Were my soul but in a good condition, and were I but sure of it, ah! how rich should I esteem myself, though blessed but with bread and water.'

¹ In *Select Works*. L. F. Brown, pp. 36-7, describes the position of Dell and the Baptists. Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 1912, p. 119, erroneously states that Dell was opposed to university learning, while all other writers on education have neglected him entirely.

² Whitley, *History of British Baptists*, pp. 182-3.

³ See the *D.N.B.*

⁴ *D.N.B.*

⁵ Whitley, *Contribution of Nonconformity*.

⁶ Troeltsch, pp. 807-15.

III QUAKERS

THE history of the Quakers has been more completely investigated, and more satisfactorily written than that of any other religious group of the period. To some extent the smallness and compactness of the subject has made this possible, but it is also the result of a vigorous historical-mindedness on the part of those people who claim to have the least interest in religious tradition. So well has the task been done that it would be presumptuous to attempt more than a summary of what others have already written. In the following pages most of the references to original sources have been taken from standard secondary authorities or reprints of first-hand materials.

During the Restoration the Quakers were the most despised and the most persecuted of any sect. Englishmen as a whole regarded them as the scum of the people who held opinions destructive of the social order.¹ And it is probable that in the period after the establishment of the Protectorate some radicals were to be found among them.² The sadistic treatment which they suffered at the hands of officers of the law was not unlike that meted out to 'subversive agitators and extremists' to-day.³ Nevertheless, Quakers were being driven to adopt a relatively conservative and quietist outlook which had a moderating influence on their social ideas. In the eighteenth century they became as a body respectable and rich, and the revolutionary doctrines tended to disappear. Even in the seventeenth century there were many signs of this development towards a more bourgeois social outlook.⁴ Disillusioned in their attempt to remake the world by converting individuals, finding themselves in an improved economic and social position, Quakers agreed to compromise with the society about them. Moreover, although they thought of themselves as distinct from other religious groups, the ethics of puritanism had always had a strong influence among them. Puritans who turned Quaker did not shed their puritanism.⁵

¹ *Causes of the Decay of Christian Piety*, pp. 227, 237-8; Blome, Richard, *The Fanatick History*, 1660; Hollywell, Henry, *An Account of Familism as it is Revived and Propagated by the Quakers*, 1673.

² Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas*, pp. 233 ff.; Braithwaite, *Second Period of Quakerism*, 1919, pp. 556-7.

³ See, for example, *The Cry of Innocent Blood, Sounding to the Ear of Each Member in Parliament. Being a Short Relation of the Barbarous cruelties Inflicted Lately upon the . . . Quakers at Their Meeting in Horsleydown in the County of Surrey*. By C. H., 1670.

⁴ Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 558, 560; Grubb, Isabel, *Quakerism and Industry*, 1930, ch. iv.

⁵ Braithwaite, *The Beginnings of Quakerism*, p. 48; *Second Period*, p. 524.

For Quakers, too, the family of parents and children, masters and servants, was a fundamental social institution. Using the ordinary terminology of all Christian groups of the time, leaders advised parents to discipline and educate their children and servants. George Fox ordered that no child should marry without the consent of his parents.¹ Fathers were to choose a calling for their sons, and masters were to discipline apprentices, not permitting them to escape subjection by buying themselves out before their time was up.² On the other side, servants were to obey and serve masters as a part of their service to God; religious equality did not destroy subjection to superiors either in the large national family, or the smaller domestic group.³ So heavy, in fact, was the discipline of servants that maids complained of oppression.⁴

On the subject of wages Quakers had as little to say as had the other Nonconformists. Some objection was made to paying labourers in goods, and no one was to be underpaid.⁵ But no standard of justice was laid down. The weakness as well as the strength of the Quaker movement was its refusal to be bound by formal rules. The man who was guided by inner light needed no definition of the just wage:⁶ as Barclay said, ethics is a study not so necessary for true Christians.⁷ Nevertheless, there was little doubt that the Holy Spirit would induce the poor to be content.

Quakers were similarly children of the time in their attitude to slavery. They did not oppose it, but urged that slaves were to be treated as men and Christians. Fox had written in his *Journal* that slaves should be freed after thirty years' service, but in the 1694 edition this was softened to 'certain years'.⁸

From the first, Quakers were suspected of being disrespectful of property rights; but the official pronouncements of the Society of Friends always denied the truth of these suspicions. In the *Apology* Barclay asserted that his co-religionists had no sympathy for the wild schemes of Anabaptists who wanted to lay all common: every man had a just title to what he could earn or what was left him by his parents, and charity was to be a strictly voluntary virtue. Even the magistrate ought not arbitrarily to despoil the subject of his property.⁹

¹ *Epistles*, § 624 (1698).

² *Ibid.*, and §§ 277, 278.

³ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, pp. 310-13; Barclay, *Apology*, 1736 ed., p. 516; *A Catechism and Confession of Faith* (1673) in *Truth Triumphant*, 1692, pp. 151-2; Fox, *Epistles*, §§ 382, 389, 409. William Smith's *Universal Love* (1663), i, pp. 75-84, in *Balm for Gilead*, 1675, is the most complete statement of family duties. See *Letters, Etc., of Early Friends*, 1841, for William Penn's views on family discipline.

⁴ Grubb, pp. 167-8. ⁵ *Idem*, pp. 41-2; Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 562-4.

⁶ Crisp, Stephen, *A Word in Due Season* (1666), p. 152, in *A Memorable Account*, 1694.

⁷ *Apology*, p. 312.

⁸ Braithwaite, *Second Period*, p. 596; *Beginnings*, p. 495.

⁹ *Second Period*, pp. 556-7, 145; Gooch, pp. 233, 302-3; Barclay, pp. 448, 516.

This latter statement was enlarged by Penn to include a reasoned defence of the right of ownership. Because of their refusal to pay tithes as well as their offending against the acts of uniformity, Quakers probably suffered more from fines and distrainments than other Dissenters, and they were not slow to use the economic arguments in their pleas for toleration.¹ But Penn went beyond the usual contention that liberty of conscience would be a useful stimulus to trade. In *England's Great Interest in the Choice of This New Parliament* (1679) and in *England's Present Interest Considered* (1675), he based his appeal on precedent and political expediency.² With a great show of historical learning, quoting authorities from Caesar to Selden, he asserted that from before the Roman Conquest to his own day English liberty had been nourished by three roots. The first was, 'an ownership and undisturbed possession: that what they have is rightly theirs, and no body's else'. Secondly, there had always been 'a voting of every law that is made, whereby that ownership or propriety may be maintained'. And lastly, the people had controlled the application of the law through the institution of the jury. So far, then, Penn combined liberty and property according to the best seventeenth-century practice. But it was not enough that property was subjected to the control of owners who had a hand in the government. The ancient Britons had also maintained the principle that 'what I possess is absolutely mine own'. 'No man in England is born slave to another; neither hath one right to inherit the sweat of the others brow, or reap the benefit of his labour, but by consent; therefore no man should be deprived of his property unless he injure another man's, and then by legal judgement.' Penn's thought is confused at this point, but the main thread is clear: even the state which is representative has no right to confiscate property except when the individual has injured the estate of a fellow citizen. Without pressing the argument too far, we may say that Penn was outlining an absolutist theory of property, although he based it on historical precedent, and on expediency. If men are deprived of their estates, he continued, because of their religious convictions, there will arise a disrespect for property which will endanger the security of all the rich, including the prince himself. Consequently, the discreet ruler should be extremely cautious in the matter of fines and distrainments.

The kernel of Penn's theory was, of course, classic bourgeois. The middle sort of men, the small property-owners, and the big capitalist had used it and continued to use it for many years to come to protect themselves from the claims of feudal aristocrats and modern

¹ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 512; Penn, *One Project for the Good of England* (1679), in *Works*, 1726, vol. ii; *The Great Case of Liberty of Conscience Debated* (1670), ch. v, in *Works*, vol. i; Grubb, pp. 114-15.

² The former in vol. ii, the latter in vol. i, of the *Works*.

proletarians. In its best form it rested on the supposition that a man earned what he owned, and contracted with his fellows equally and freely: to the labourer belongs 'the benefit of his labour'. Defending the yeomen, tradesmen, and artisans who were Quakers from the persecutions inflicted by men of property who sat in the Anglican Parliament, Penn appealed to their interest, to the theory by which they had justified their actions in the Long Parliament and which they were to use again in 1688. And he showed political sagacity in making that appeal: threatened by a Catholic king, Anglican owners gave to the Dissenters in 1689 that protection and security which they desired for themselves. Henceforth, men were to enjoy the fruits of their labour in peace. Unfortunately, the principles which Penn repeated in chorus with a hundred others did not fulfil their promises in practice. The farmers of Pennsylvania had to abolish the property rights of Penn's heirs before they could begin to own what they earned; all men did not earn what they owned, nor did all men consent freely to the contracts which they made. But this was not apparent to the thinkers of the period, and Penn was sincerely defending the small estates of his fellow Quakers as well as his own large fortune.

Finally, in their conception of the calling and of the ethics of business, Quakers did not differ essentially from the other Nonconformist groups. Industry and hard work were insisted upon, and members were not permitted to allege the testimony of the spirit as an excuse for laziness.¹ Thrift and asceticism were practised with more vigour than among most of the other Dissenters.² The true Christian, said Penn, will not destroy the world for fear of evil. On the contrary, he will maintain his own purity in the midst of sin.³ Wealth was for use and enjoyment, and all men need not live on the same scale, but all should avoid sensuality.⁴ Quakers also had a high regard for the virtue of prudence. Members were warned against contracting too many debts, dangerous speculation, and careless book-keeping; bankrupts were cast out, although members were also helped by charitable loans from brethren.⁵ Like other groups, Quakers condemned the common economic sins of engrossing, using false weights and measures, cheating, and the like.⁶

Although nothing was said about a just price, Friends were noted

¹ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 137; Fox, *Epistles*, §§ 79, 285.

² Grubb, chs. ii, vi; Crisp, *A Word in Due Season*, pp. 149-51; Penn, *Address to Protestants* (1679), pt. i, in *Works*, vol. i.

³ *No Cross, No Crown* (1668), ch. iv, in *Works*, vol. i.

⁴ Barclay, *Apology*, pp. 516-17; Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, ch. iv; Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 503-4.

⁵ Braithwaite, *ibid.*, pp. 500, 560; Grubb, p. 90; Fox, *Epistles*, § 200.

⁶ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, p. 516; *Second Period*, pp. 560-1; Grubb, ch. iii; Barclay, *Apology*, p. 182.

for their refusal to bargain and bicker. Tillotson observed, 'We commend the Quakers because they are at a word in all their dealings'.¹ From the first leaders insisted that buyers and sellers should be at 'yea and nay' in their trading, keeping to the principle of the fixed price; it seems probable that fixed retail prices became customary among Quakers before they were generally used by the business world.² But it does not follow, as Miss Grubb suggests, that the Quakers were more strict about just prices than was, for example, the *Christian Directory*. Fixed prices no doubt eliminated petty cheats—a child could buy in a Quaker shop which did not alter prices for every customer. But just prices and retail prices which are fixed are not the same thing; modern business often uses the latter without the former. Trusting to the guidance of the spirit, Quakers spoke less of how to determine the just price than did Baxter.³

The Society of Friends noticed even before the Restoration that honesty was good for business. Fox and other leaders were alarmed at the business success of their followers who were enriched precisely because they maintained most strictly the ethical principles so well fitted to advance individuals in a bourgeois world.⁴ The discipline which, as a relatively small and well-organized body, Quakers could exercise over their own members, served to strengthen their reputation as honest, prudent, and industrious men of business.⁵ Cut off from politics, finding it difficult, perhaps, to enter the ranks of the gentry because they could not pay tithes on land,⁶ Quakers became traders and developed the Puritan economic ethic to a classic perfection, becoming themselves the perfect men of business.⁷ It was in the philosophy of Benjamin Franklin, who received his training in business from a Quaker, that Weber found the most complete expression of the spirit of capitalism.

At the same time, Quaker thought contained elements which could be used as a basis of criticism of that spirit. In their battle with feudalism the commercial classes made use of revolutionary ideas which could in turn be used against themselves. More than once, bourgeois theorists had to abandon their theories when their revolution had been

¹ *Sermon X* in *Morning Exercises*, i. 208.

² Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, pp. 48, 211, 313; *Second Period*, p. 497; Crisp, *An Epistle of Tender Counsel and Advice* (1680), p. 431, in *A Memorable Account*; Fox, *Doctrinals*, 1706, pp. 128-9.

³ Grubb, pp. 28-9, 44-5.

⁴ Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, pp. 152, 309; *Second Period*, pp. 327, 499, 503-4; Grubb, ch. ix and pp. 180-1.

⁵ Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 253, 509, 560-1; Grubb, ch. v; Beck and Ball, *London Friends' Meetings*, 1869, contains many examples of disciplinary action.

⁶ Presumably Quakers did not object to paying tithes to laymen.

⁷ Troeltsch, pp. 781-2; Grubb, pp. 180-1, and ch. ix.

achieved. The equalitarian principles which helped to destroy the power of kings, priests, and aristocrats, were also dangerous allies for the victorious middle classes. Often these principles became enemies, or were quietly forgotten.

But among the Quakers, equalitarianism did not completely disappear. Just because they were the most ardent defenders of bourgeois society, just because they were themselves in many ways the most perfect men of business, Quakers retained more of the revolutionary spirit which had opposed feudalism, and which the socialists were to revive at a later date. It is true that they abandoned any hopes which they may have had of making a radical change in English society of the Restoration, although they did fight for religious freedom.

Yet as a sect which was cut off from the rest of the population, cut off from the sentiments and ideas which were current among other men, Quakers were able to conserve some of their radical principles, and to some extent to put these principles into practice among themselves. A modern history of socialism must deal with the Quakers of the Restoration as well as with those of the Interregnum.¹ Bernstein is undoubtedly right in stating that the philanthropic activity of later Quakers was the expression of socialist tendencies which could not be realized in other ways. Quakers have never completely lost their early sympathy with equalitarianism which can and does occasionally move in a socialist direction. In the Restoration this radical tendency among Friends was still strong enough to make them suspected as revolutionaries.

As we saw above, the Puritans did much to raise the position of women. Quakers went far beyond the usual Puritan position. Asserting that men and women were in all respects equal, they gave the latter an equal part, in theory at least, in all religious affairs. The inequality introduced by the Fall, said Fox, was eradicated by the sacrifice of the Redeemer.² And Quakers maintained a high view of marriage. Enforced celibacy was regarded by Fox as devilish. Marriage, he said, is an ordinance of God to be undertaken solemnly, and once undertaken to be maintained permanently. Adultery is sin and Quakers must make an open declaration of their intentions before uniting themselves. Nothing was said of divorce, but it was probably permitted, for Fox complained of young people who ran from wife to wife and husband to husband.³ Whether for this reason, or because Quakers

¹ See Bernstein, Eduard, *Cromwell and Communism*, 1922, ch. xvi.

² *Epistles*, §§ 291, 320; Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 270-4; Gooch, p. 230; see the Note by Alice Clark in Norman Penny's edition of the *Household Account Book of Sarah Fell*, 1920.

³ *Epistles*, §§ 67, 264, 389; Beck and Ball, *London Friends' Meetings*, pp. 47-52; Braithwaite, *Second Period*, p. 256-7.

refused to be married according to the law by clergymen, the Bishops of Ely, Salisbury, and York reported that these people were fornicators.¹

Friends were also interested in the education of women, and established schools for that purpose.² Their attitude to education in general was similar to that of the Baptists. They defended the study of languages, and of technical and practical sciences. Fox was much interested in natural science, and left property in Philadelphia to be used as a botanical garden. Penn spoke of him as 'a divine and a naturalist'.³ Even during the period of persecution, Quakers established schools: by the end of the century most of their children were educated in Quaker institutions, and many school-books had been written for them.⁴

Fox and his followers were whole-heartedly in favour of that popular and practical education so essential for a growing industrial society. At the same time they were contemptuous of the academic learning of the day. They distrusted heathen philosophy and the theology based upon it. Such studies did not, they said, produce true knowledge nor good men. The spirit was the best teacher for Christians. In Barclay's *Apology* the religious opposition to the learning of the Universities, and of Aristotle, is set out in detail.⁵ But the opposition was not simply religious: it was connected with a radical attack upon the worldly power and wealth of the Church. Speaking to clergymen, Penn said, 'you place the ground of divine knowledge in human arts and sciences, that thereby you may ingross a function to yourselves, and keep up your trade of yearly gain upon the poor people . . .'.⁶ Just as the mass was devised to get money, so was education made a prerequisite for clergymen in order that the poor might be excluded and ministers might get estates and preferments.⁷ Barclay's attack on the social position of the clergymen, their lands, money, and political power, was common enough among Quakers. The Church saved wealth instead of the souls of men. 'These avaricious hirelings have come to that degree of malice and rage that several poor labouring men have been carried hundreds of miles from their own dwellings and shut up in prison, some two, some three, yea, some seven years together, for the value of one pound sterling and less.'⁸

¹ Turner, G. L., *Original Records of Early Nonconformity*, 1911-14, iii (1669), 81, 93, 102.

² Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 254, 527-8.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 528-9; Beck and Ball, pp. 131-2; Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, ch. xv.

⁴ Braithwaite, *Second Period*, pp. 289, 525-31, 535; *Beginnings*, p. 370; Beck and Ball, pp. 360-1.

⁵ Proposition X, pp. 309-16; Lawson, Thomas, *A Mite into the Treasury* (1680); Fox, *A Primer for the Scholars and Doctors of Europe* (1659).

⁶ *Truth Exalted* (1668) in *Works*, i. 243.

⁷ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, ch. vii; Barclay, *Apology*, pp. 201, 276 ff.

⁸ *Apology*, p. 339. The whole passage is pp. 328-340.

In one or two passages Fox went so far as to say that clergymen had prevented religion from remaking the world and abolishing poverty. Christians are capable of bringing into being a world where there would be no beggars, but ministers are afraid of losing their own wealth, so they teach that perfection is impossible and that sin will always make men poor.¹ These teachers of the world, calling themselves ministers of Christ, said they had received the gift which made men perfect. 'And the people followed them, and were glad that they would bring them to a perfect man's state, that is, to the state of Adam and Eve before they fell, for they were perfect then; and when we had followed them, some twenty, some thirty, some more, some less years, then they told us again that they hoped we would not look for perfection while we are upon earth, on this side of the grave, for we must carry a body of sin about us; and they hoped we would not look for perfection; . . . we have given our money, and have spent our labour in following them, . . . and now they have gotten our money, they hope we will not look for perfection here. Oh, Deceivers!'² Such statements were not common after 1660, but they show the radical tendencies inherent in Quaker doctrine.

Some of the Friends' text-books and grammars were written to prove that the use of 'you' for single persons was the result of sinful pride, exalting one man over his fellows.³ Although they did not attack differences of wealth, Quakers were equalitarian to the point of refusing to use titles of honour—titles which had been inherited from feudal times. Bowing and taking off of hats were forbidden.⁴ Noblemen, said Penn, have no right to titles or honour merely because of their birth. Old families who are contemptuous of upstarts ought to know that no family can be genteel in origin. Education and virtue, not blood, entitle men to respect.⁵

In caring for their own poor, Quakers were justly famous. If they could not eradicate poverty in England they did try to organize a national system of relief for their own members so that Quakers could never be beggars.⁶ In 1677 York Meeting was able to care for its own poor and refused to allow them to accept help from parish officers.⁷ Provision was made for the disabled, children were apprenticed, capital was lent to young men, those in prison were provided with work

¹ *Epistles*, § 262 (1668).

² *Ibid.*, § 222 (1662).

³ Fox, Stubbs, and Furley, *A Battle-door for Teachers and Professors to Learn Singular and Plural* (1660).

⁴ Penn, *No Cross, No Crown*, chs. ix, x; Barclay, *Apology*, pp. 523-4, 530; Braithwaite, *Beginnings*, pp. 229, 494-5, 520.

⁵ *No Cross, No Crown*, ch. xi; Barclay, *A Catechism*, p. 151.

⁶ *Beginnings*, pp. 335-6; Beck and Ball, p. 49.

⁷ *Second Period*, p. 566.

in order that they might support their families.¹ And the unemployed were set to work. Workhouses were established in several Quaker communities, and stocks were provided in others; it was as a manager of a scheme for employing spinners that John Bellers gained his practical experience in dealing with poverty.² Furthermore, very little was said about men who could get work if they wanted. If idle beggars become convinced of their wickedness, said Fox and Stephen Crisp, they must be relieved and given work.³ Appealing to the Convention Parliament, Thomas Lawson urged as a principle 'that no poor people be denied their former liberty nor strict course taken against them until some good means be used to supply their wants'.⁴ If men had heard his plea, the Settlement Act of 1662 would not have been passed. In general, the practical philanthropy of Quakers was an outgrowth of their more radical ideas of equality.⁵

Finally, Quakers parted company with their contemporaries on the question of war. After some wavering it was officially decided that Quakers, redeemed out of the world, could never take part in any armed conflicts. But it was realized that such a policy was impractical and impossible for men who did not listen to the spirit. The world was not ready for pacifism, and consequently war was said to be lawful for those who were not redeemed, just as ceremonies had been necessary and lawful for the Jews.⁶ Quakers, no less than other men, were unable to find a solution to the problem, but they were more sensitive to the evil of war, and were determined to set an example and a witness to others. As witnesses, and as the preservers of certain principles of justice, Quakers performed a notable service, even though they were unable to change the face of England in the seventeenth century.

¹ Ibid., pp. 559-60, 565-9; Grubb, ch. v; Fox, *Epistles*, §§ 263, 264.

² Grubb, ch. viii; *Second Period*, pp. 207, 570 ff.

³ *Epistles*, § 285; *Second Period*, p. 566.

⁴ *An Appeal to the Parliament Concerning the Poor, That There May Not Be a Beggar in England*, 1660.

⁵ *Second Period*, p. 235.

⁶ *Beginnings*, pp. 519-20; *Second Period*, pp. 610-23.

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